

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE MASTERS OF B&W • EXCITING BLACK AND WHITE APPS TO TRY!

INDIA'S #1  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
MAGAZINE

www.betterphotography.in

April 2015 • Rs. 150  
(Total 152 pages)

INSIDE  
AN EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE ON THE  
ART OF CELLPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

# Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SHOOT

# BLACK & WHITE

EXCLUSIVE TESTS

Sirui P-324S Monopod

Canon PowerShot SX710 HS

Sony DT 11-18mm f/4.5-5.6

  
**Sigma dp1 Quattro**  
In a class all by  
itself, with plenty  
of quirks

HDR, Nature, Wedding, Architecture,  
Self-portraits, Abstracts, Street & more!

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Step into Roger Ballen's  
absurd psychological world

ON ASSIGNMENT

Create abstract photos within  
the four walls of your room

PHOTOFEATURE

A look at the diminishing  
careers of *Jatra* artists

PROFILE

Jayantha Roy on the making  
of his ethereal landscapes

Network

18

# Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Insight. Better Pictures

VOLUME 18 • ISSUE 11 • APRIL 2015



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- Visit <http://betterphotography.in/contests> and register yourself on the website
- Participate in the relevant contests on the page. There will always be a contest open for you to take part in!
- For Reader's Gallery contests, make sure the images have been made using a cellphone
- For Reader's Tip and Your Pictures contests, include a 100-word note on how and why you shot the image
- Winners of all the contests get featured on our website and can be featured in the magazine too. They will also receive special prizes!

### Send in a synopsis, with low-resolution images for viewing, to contribute articles to the following sections:

On Assignment, Step-by-Step, Photofeature, Tips & Tricks, Shooting Technique, History, Story Behind the Picture

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## EDITORIAL

**Capturing an excellent frame is all about being disappointed.**



## An Expansion of Thought, Narrowing of Approach

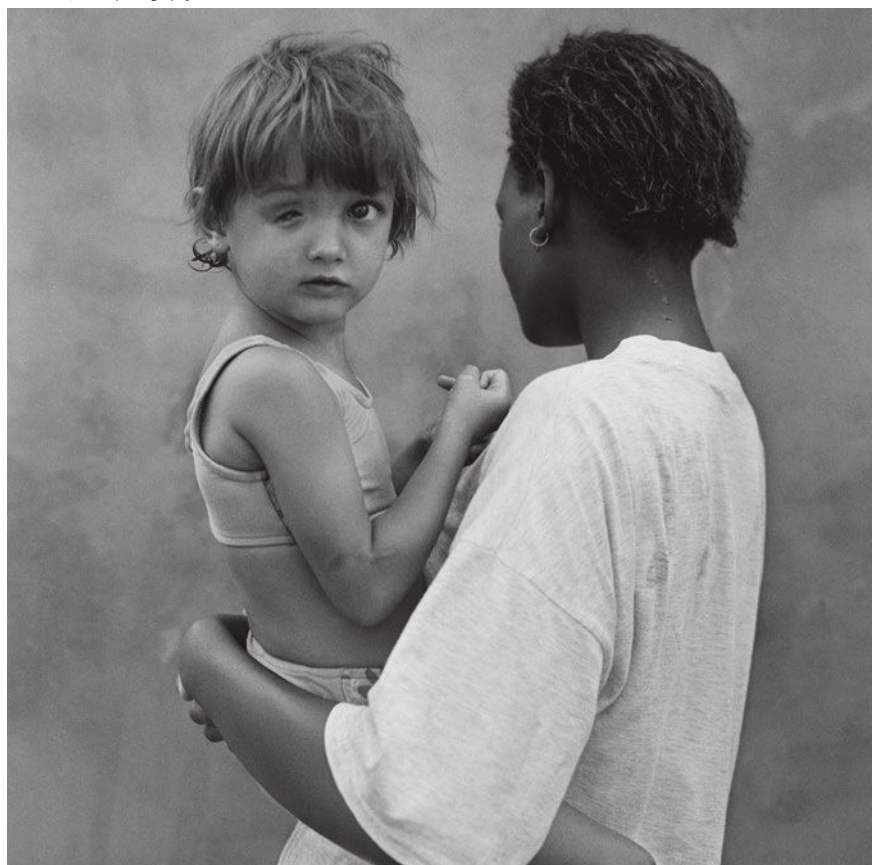
Young photographers, not in age but in starting out, have never had it as good. For someone who is extremely passionate, it takes about five years of rigorous, single-minded practice to start producing excellent frames that can begin to compete with the best in the world.

If one were to study the elements of this practice, it begins with arriving at the decision of taking up photography, not necessarily as a conscious choice, but out of an interest to record moments from the immediate environment. There is then a process of first acquiring a visual and technical foundation, and using it well. The next step is to try very, very hard to be at the right place at the right time. This is easier said than done. Capturing an excellent frame is all about being disappointed... perhaps over 1000 disappointments to a single good picture. In fact, if you have not felt the pain of failure often enough, chances are that you are not really trying hard, or that you are not setting the bar high enough. This is an important juncture.

Over the course of time, one learns that a large part of success depends on understanding the behaviour and nuances of one's subject, and this may involve additional study and observations. This knowledge is put to use constructively, and photography moves to the next level. Going further, the cycle repeats, just on higher levels, refining the methods and processes into ways of practice.

There really is nothing new in all of this. It is the way learning occurs and takes root. This is the way art gets practiced. There are indeed no short-cuts in the pursuit of a good frame.

**K Madhavan Pillai**  
editor@betterphotography.in



## Outland

**by Roger Ballen**

Roger rarely carries a camera with him, even when travelling. He says it takes time to understand a place and that he isn't interested in being a tourist. For this reason, he chooses to make photographs only in his adopted homeland, South Africa. Even then, he limits his photography mostly to whichever series he is working on at that point in time. Some of these idiosyncrasies may come because he has always used B&W film. Others may arise from the notion that he refuses to view photography as something that is in any way frivolous.

**To better understand Roger Ballen's photographic notions and aesthetic —**

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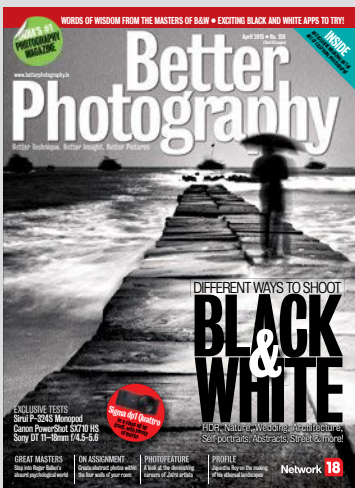
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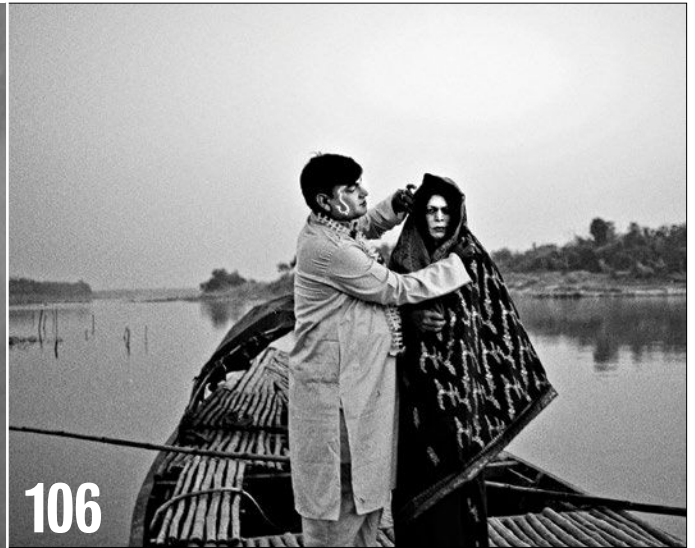
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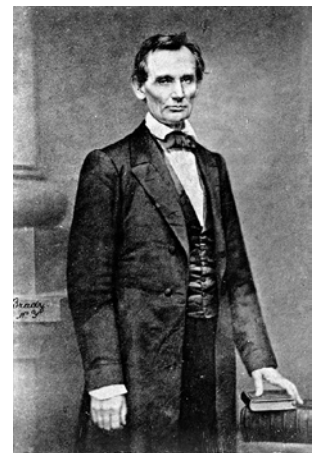
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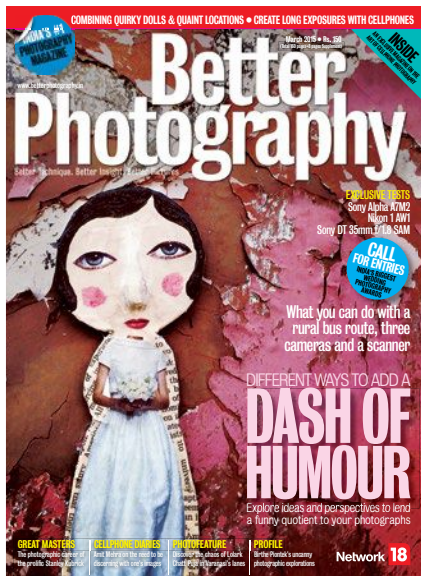
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# Feedback

Send your suggestions, thoughts, and feedback letters to...  
[feedback@betterphotography.in](mailto:feedback@betterphotography.in)  
Every month, the 'Letter of the Month' will win a special gift from



**"All the species in this world are precious, and photography as a medium can help convey, establish and even interpret this fact in different ways."**



## Tickling the Funny Bone

I was really surprised to see the cover of the March 2015 issue of *Better Photography*! I did not expect such an unconventional cover, and I must say, the doll's oversized head reminded me of puppet plays and theatre with woodcuts. What a wonderful way to turn the real world into a diorama! I would also like to thank the artist, Davorka Andjelic for inspiring me to go back to my rusty arts and crafts skills and trying to figure out how to creatively use them in my photography.  
**Colette Fernandes, Mumbai, via email**

## Relishing Cellphone Interviews

Only recently, I realised that *Better Photography* has increased the length of cellphone interviews, and I'm so glad about it. I get to see a lot more of the photographer's work, and I'm also introduced to so many different ways of imagemaking that I didn't even think were possible with a cellphone—from architectural photography to documentation of social and environmental issues. It is so heartening to see cellphone imagery being taken to a new level and seriousness. I hope that someday I too will be able to create a strong body of work using my cellphone!  
**Divya Chacko, via email**

## My Motto This Year

I've been an ardent reader of *Better Photography* from the last two years, and

every page of the magazine takes me on a magical journey. 'The Pursuit of Identity' which appeared in the March 2015 issue, was one such article, as it showed me how one goes in search of one's identity, despite the complexities of life. Kudos to Birthe Piontek for her brilliant work! It is indeed very inspirational. All the species in this world are precious, and I think that photography as a medium can help convey, establish and even interpret this fact in various ways.

**Reshma Bhat, via email**

## In-depth Cellphone Articles

While I enjoy **BP**'s cellphone supplement, I often wish that there were more in-depth features, critical essays or even analysis of trends in cellphone photography. While the interviews expose me to various works, I would like to know more about how cellphone imagery is affecting the coverage of events around the world, and where cellphone imaging technology is headed. I would also love to see **BP** pitting the current flagship cameraphones in the market against each other.

**Udit Mehta, Mysore, via email**

## The Dragonfly Trail

It was wonderful to see Babu Rajan's macro work in the February 2015 issue of *Better Photography*. I am an Electrical Engineer, and have worked on the instrumentation in

➤ The cover story of the March 2015 issue of *Better Photography* was dedicated to finding humour in photographs. The cover picture was made by Davorka Andjelic.

➤ M R Padmaraju sent us this macro image that he shot using the Pentax K-x and a 100mm f/4 macro lens.



M R Padmaraju

## The Need for Innovative Displays

Of late, there have been a number of photo festivals in India. While this is a wonderful thing as more and more photographers get to showcase their work, as a viewer, I somehow feel inundated with events that occur in quick succession. Just as silence is important for music, one also needs some time to absorb and reflect upon the various works that one sees, and the talks and lectures that one hears. Having said that, it is wonderful to finally see the Indian photographic fraternity opening its doors to experimentation and mixed media.

I have one more observation—usually, in most exhibitions, photographs are wonderfully arranged, albeit hang inside gallery spaces or even restaurants. While it is great to introduce images in a variety of spaces, it would be great to take them off walls and frames and come up with displays that truly engage the viewer. JR, the French artist's *Inside Out* project, which also

took place in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, is one such example of photographs engaging with the masses. The *Blind Boys* exhibition that was done on the streets of Mumbai, was also an innovative experience. The prints were arranged in creative ways, to go along with the existing graffiti and street art of the suburban Chui village. There was also an open air show where projectors were set up on promenades along the sea, and anyone could view the works of participating photographers.

Besides organising talks, portfolio reviews and workshops, paying attention to the manner in which photographs are displayed, can play an extremely important role in the effectiveness and reach of photo festivals. Photography is an art form that can be so democratic in nature. I think that its viewing can also be similarly democratic, inclusive and even revolutionary.

**Dania Mendes, Goa, via email**



We believe that the joy of a family photo is in displaying it. To make your special memories stand out, this **Letter of the Month** wins a special Photo Frame from Red Moments!



the wind tunnel facility at NAL for 18 years. He was my junior for over twenty years and I ended up becoming the link between two generations of photographers in the laboratory—our guru, C Rajagopal and Babu Rajan. For all that Babu and I have achieved in photography, I would like to thank NAL and our guru for allowing us to grow.

**M R Padmaraju, Bengaluru, via email**

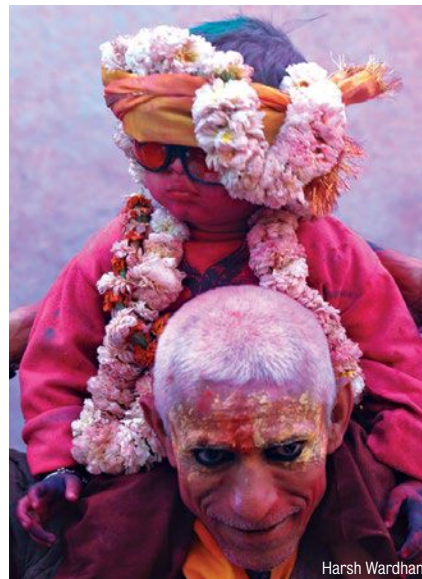
## Holi Woes

Holi is one of my favourite Indian festivals. It was nice to see tips related to shooting the festival in the Tips and Tricks section of the March 2015 issue of **BP**. While it was good to see places like Barsana mentioned, I'd like to bring a few other places to your notice, such as Brij near Mathura and the Krishna temple at Nandgaon.

However, the narrow bylanes of these towns are not equipped to handle the onslaught of hundreds of people, tourists and photographers alike. Foreigners and especially women are singled out to be doused with colour. Quite a few youngsters are intoxicated and end up misbehaving.

Photographers, too, have a real tough time as there is plenty of dust, water and muck all around. There is also a lot of jostling to get that perfect shot and it is nearly impossible for one to get an unobstructed view.

**Harsh Wardhan, via email**



➔ Harsh Wardhan sent us this image that he shot during the festival of Holi this year.

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# SnapShots

## WHAT'S NEW

### Olympus Stylus SH-2

The Stylus SH-2 is an advanced superzoom compact that borrows the styling of Olympus' PEN cameras. The most significant feature in the SH-2 is the inclusion of RAW. Besides this the camera retains the 24x zoom (25-600mm equiv.), 16MP BSI CMOS sensor, 5-axis image stabilization and built-in Wi-Fi.



### Nikon Coolpix P900

The camera features a whopping 83x zoom (24-2000mm) f/2.8-6.5 lens, with a 16MP sensor. It also has a 7fps continuous shooting mode, built-in Wi-Fi with NFC, built-in EVF and a fully articulated 3-inch 921k-dot LCD. The P900 can record 1080p60 video and uses a new Dual Detect optical stabilization system, claiming up to 5 stops of shake reduction.



### Sony Announces Four New Lenses

Designed for the E-mount full-frame camera system, these lenses include the FE 28mm f/2, the Zeiss Distagon T\* FE 35mm f/1.4 ZA, the FE 90mm f/2.8 Macro G OSS, and the FE 24-240mm f/3.5-6.3 OSS.



Also released were four new converters. The new SEL075UWC and SEL057FEC are ultra-wide and fisheye converters, respectively, for full-frame E-mount lenses, while the VCL-ECU2 and VCL-ECF2 do the same for APS-C bodies.

### Panasonic Adds Two New MFT Lenses

Panasonic introduced the LUMIX G MACRO 30mm f/2.8 ASPH. MEGA O.I.S lens and the 30mm 42.5mm f/1.7 portrait lens with Power O.I.S. Both lenses are compatible with 240 fps drive AF.



## Indian Photographers Take HIPA by Storm

The Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum International Photography Awards (HIPA) concluded its *Life in Colour* themed contest on 16 March. A total of USD 400,000 (approx. Rs. 2.5 crores) was awarded as cash prizes.

The competition saw the participation of photographers from 166 countries. 30,878 photographers submitted 60,162 photographs, from which India's Anurag Kumar took away the Grand Prize of USD 120,000 (approx. Rs. 75,00,000). Over 10% of all participants this year were from India. Apart from this, Aruna Bhat, from India as well, won the first prize of USD 25,000 (approx. Rs. 15,00,000) in



Aruna Bhat

the *Life in Colour* category. Harish Chavda, United Kingdom; Rudoi Vladimirovich, Russia and Peng Li, China, each received USD 15,000 (approx. Rs. 9,40,000) as the first prize in the *General, Faces (Black & White)* and *Night Photography* categories, respectively. HIPA also announced *Happiness* as the new theme for its 2015-2016 contest.



Anurag Kumar

“I appreciate simplicity, true beauty that lasts over time, and a little wit and eclecticism that makes life more fun.”

ELLIOT ERWITT (1928)

Elliott Erwitt is an advertising and documentary photographer known for his black and white candid photography. His images find the humour in ironic and absurd situations within everyday settings. More recently, Erwitt created a pretenious alter ego called André S Solidor, in order to “satirise the kooky excesses of contemporary photography.” He describes his alter ego as, “a contemporary artist, from one of the French colonies in the Caribbean, I forget which one”. He was awarded the Royal Photographic Society's Centenary Medal and Honorary Fellowship, and the International Center for Photography's Infinity Award in the Lifetime Achievement category.



www.wikipedia.org

## WHAT'S NEW

### HTC One M9

The HTC One M9 drops the "Ultrapixel" sensor in favour of a regular 20MP CMOS sensor for its back camera. The camera uses a 27.5mm f/2.2 lens, has a dual LED flash and is capable of recording 4k video. It has, however, lost the secondary back camera. So the M8's Duo Camera features will probably not be available.



### Samsung Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge

The two new Samsung Galaxy phones come with a 16MP sensor, a very fast f/1.9 lens and OIS. It features real time HDR and multi-frame low light modes. Other specifications include a 64-bit octa-core processor, a 5.1-inch Quad-HD Super AMOLED display with a pixel density of 577 ppi and wireless charging.



### Eyesfi Mobi Pro 32GB Card

Eyesfi Mobi Pro is a new 32GB WiFi SD card. It improves the existing model by adding the ability to wirelessly transfer RAW image files. It also has new photo categorisation and search functions.

### Elinchrom ELB 400

This new portable flash system is supposed to have faster recycling times and more flash bursts per charge. The Elinchrom ELB 400 should be able to manage up to 350 full power flashes per charge, and can recycle in 1.6 seconds after a maximum output burst.



### Adorama Flashpoint Ring Li-On 400ws

Camera store Adorama has launched a 400ws ring flash which features a fully circular flash tube, that is capable of accommodating a lens barrel with a diameter of up to 3.5in/95mm. With a guide number of 25m at ISO 100 the ring flash should be powerful enough not only for macro work, but also for headshots and full-length portraits.

### Loweepro Fastpack Bags

The pair of new backpacks from Loweepro are weather-proof and have a section that can be used to store a laptop or tablet. The Fastpack BP 150 AW II and BP 250 AW II are exactly the same bags but in two different sizes. They each have three sections that accommodates camera equipment, as well as other items that a traveler may need.



## Nikon's Prosumer DSLR Gets an Upgrade

The newly announced Nikon D7200 uses an improved 24.2MP CMOS sensor, but retains the weather-sealed magnesium alloy body of its predecessor. While it isn't a radical upgrade to the beloved D7100, the D7200 does seem to have some salient features.

The D7200's noteworthy features include a next generation 51-point AF module with increased low light sensitivity, an EXPEED 4 image processing chip, built-in Wi-Fi with NFC and an improved 100-shot buffer.

The D7200 can now extend its ISO higher than on its predecessor to ISO 51,200 and 102,400. However, at these ISOs the camera will be able to shoot black and white images only. Other notable features include

1080/60p video recording, improved battery life of 1100 shots per charge, and a weather-sealed magnesium alloy body. The D7200 will be available along with a Nikkor 18-140mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR kit lens for USD 1699 (approx. Rs. 1,05,000).



## Yi Challenge the GoPro Hero Series?

Chinese manufacturer Xiaomi has launched a GoPro competitor, the Yi Action Camera. Priced at only 399 Yuan (approx. Rs. 4000), the camera has some impressive features like a 16MP sensor and is capable of shooting 1080p60 video, which on paper at least is better than the more expensive basic GoPro Hero. It also offers 64GB of built-in storage.

Like GoPro's offering, the Yi can be used up to 40 meters underwater. A host of accessories have been planned to

accompany the camera. That said, the Yi is currently available only in China. However, its entry into India is definitely going to be something to look out for.



## Ricoh has Returned 90,000 Photos to Tsunami Victims

The 2011 earthquake and tsunami that hit the Tohoku region of Japan, left countless homeless. In response, Ricoh began the *Save the Memory Project*, with the aim of returning lost and damaged photographs to their owners.

The company says, "Many photos that were lost and damaged in the tsunami, are valuable and irreplaceable properties of the people affected by the earthquake. We collected and cleaned more than 400,000 images. The photographs were digitised and stored on cloud servers, so that people can search for them easily. Searches were carried out on computers and at local government photo centers." So far,

they have managed to return over 90,000 images to their owners. A glimpse of the mammoth effort undertaken can be viewed here: [www.ricoh.com/csr/savethememory/](http://www.ricoh.com/csr/savethememory/)



Image Courtesy: Ricoh/Save the Memory Project

## EVENTS

19 March – 5 April

### Social Animals

Alliance Francaise de Delhi, New Delhi  
International artists from across different forms of media (street art, installation art, photography, video and more) mix their practices together to present a cutting-edge program. A first in India, this exhibition is based on the notion that man is a social animal.

26 March – 18 April 2015

### As I see it...

Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi



Naveen Munjal

Everyday moments as seen by photographer Naveen Munjal form a large part of this exhibit.

26 March – 18 April 2015

### India Unposed

Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi



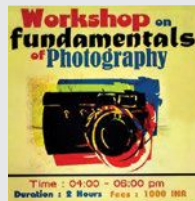
Craig Semetko

A collection of photographs from American photographer Craig Semetko's book *India Unposed* will be on display. The exhibition will showcase humorous B&W prints that Semetko captured during his three month stay in the country.

29 March

### Photography Workshop

Piramal Gallery, Mumbai



The Fisheye Institute of Photography is organising two workshops on the basics of photography for children and adults. The workshops, both two-hours long, will teach participants different techniques on how to make great images with any digital camera.

## PRO TALK

**Aspect Ratio** is the ratio of the width of the image by the height. It gives you an idea of the dimensions and shape of the image. Commonly used aspect ratios include 4:3, 16:9 and 3:2.

## iPhone Images are Showing Up on Billboards Globally

Apple has started rolling out a new advertising campaign called *Shot on iPhone 6*. Starting this week, billboards in 70 cities, including Mumbai, in 24 countries, will feature photos captured by 77 iPhone 6 photographers, from across the globe. This makes the endeavour the largest mobile photo gallery ever put together, featuring the work of a group that spans a wide range of backgrounds, nationalities, ages, professions, cultures and photography experience.

The photographs being used won't be created by professional photographers



Amar R



Dan C

for Apple. Instead, the company reviewed thousands of images on the web to select their favourites, which will be showcased. The pictures, along with additional video content, can also be found on their website: [www.apple.com/iphone/world-gallery](http://www.apple.com/iphone/world-gallery)

## CALL FOR ENTRIES



Submit your best travel photograph from Asia, and you could win over Rs. 3 lakhs and a Samsung NX1!

### Travel Photographer Asia

**The Competition:** An international photography contest that is centered around travel photography in Asia.

**Theme:** Travel photography.

**Prizes:** The winner will receive 20,900 Malaysian Ringgit (approx. Rs. 3,50,280), a Samsung NX1, a chance to participate in the Foundry Photojournalism Workshop, amongst other prizes.

**Entry Fee:** 20 Malaysian Ringgit (approx. Rs. 335) per entry.

**Website:** [www.travelphotographerasia.com/gallery](http://www.travelphotographerasia.com/gallery)

**Deadline:** 20 April

### 2015 Nikon Small World Competition

**The Competition:** The contest is open to all interested photomicrographers, that is, photography through the microscope. Participants are allowed to submit images with any kind of light microscopy technique.

**Prizes:** The first, second and third prize winner will receive USD 3000 (approx. Rs. 1,87,320), USD 2000 (approx. Rs. 1,24,900) and USD 1000 (approx. Rs. 62,450) respectively, toward the purchase of Nikon equipment.

**Website:** [www.nikonsmallworld.com/photo/info](http://www.nikonsmallworld.com/photo/info)

**Deadline:** 30 April

### Felix Schoeller Photo Award

**The Competition:** The premier photo paper manufacturer Felix Schoeller, is organising a photography contest for professional and emerging photographers worldwide.

**Categories:** Portrait, Landscape/Nature, Architecture/Industry, Photojournalism/Editorial Photography, Free Choice/Conceptual Photography, Best Work by an Emerging Photographer.

**Prizes:** The overall contest winner will receive the Felix Schoeller Photo Award in Gold, and 10,000 euros (approx. Rs. 6,68,890) in prize money. Each category winner will receive 2000 euros (approx. Rs. 1,33,790).

**Website:** [www.felix-schoeller-photoaward.com](http://www.felix-schoeller-photoaward.com)

**Deadline:** 31 May

### BW Child 2015

**The Competition:** Submit your best black and white photographs of children.

**Prizes:** The winner will receive the Black and White Child Photographer of the Year award, along with USD 1000.

**Entry Fee:** USD 10 (approx. Rs. 600) for a single image, USD 20 (approx. Rs. 1250) for three images and USD 30 (approx. Rs. 1875) for five images.

**Website:** [www.blackandwhite.childphotocompetition.com](http://www.blackandwhite.childphotocompetition.com)

**Deadline:** 15 July

2-5 April

**Photography Workshop**

Mindscreen Film Institute, Chennai

This workshop includes photography walks across heritage landmarks in Pondicherry, visits to scenic places to photograph landscapes, as well as gaining an understanding of street photography. It will be facilitated by wildlife photographer Diinesh Kumble.

3-5 April

**River Tern Tour**

Bhadra



Darter Photography

This wildlife photography tour to Bhadra reservoir will let you photograph nature at the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. The tour is designed for beginners and pros alike, and for those who are looking to get into into the wilderness.

28 February

**Tadoba Wildlife Photography Tour**

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve

This three day photography workshop will take participants through the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. Designed to include



Image Courtesy: Tadoba

four jungle Safaris over three days, it provides a great opportunity for photographers looking to explore the wilderness.

24 - 27 April

**Monks of Little Lhasa**

New Delhi

This portrait and landscape photography masterclass will take participants from New Delhi to McLeod Ganj and then Dharamshala and back. The expedition is being led by Dheeraj Paul and is conducted by India Photo Tours.

**PRO TALK**

**Time Lapse** refers to the technique of combining many photographs shot over an extended period of time, and playing them together as a video.

## Museum Photographer Wins Lifetime Achievement

The Photo Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India, awarded Surendra Patel with its prestigious Life Time Achievement Award. The Photo Division organizes the National Photography Awards to promote the arts, development, tradition and heritage, amongst other things.

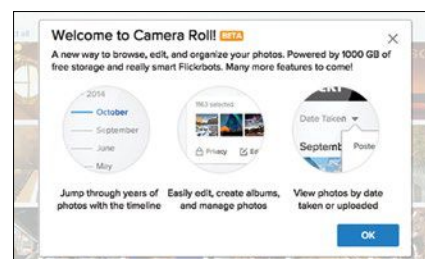
Surendra R. Patel used to be a museum photographer for the Le Corbusier museum in Ahmedabad. He is currently the President of Niharika Ahmedabad—The Gujarat Pictorialist Society, was the former President of India International Photographic Council Delhi and the former Chairperson of Colour Division, Federation of Indian Photography.

## A New and Improved Flickr Aims to Win Back Users

Early on in March, Flickr started rolling out an improved search interface for its users. Results can now be tailored according to options like colour, size and orientation, thus allowing users to fine-tune their search. Additionally, Flickr said that it was improving its algorithms to provide higher quality results for every type of search.

These changes follow the updates Flickr made in the middle of last month that improved the organisation and editing of photographs. Recently, the company also

launched a Google Chrome extension called Flickr Tab, to give users photographic inspiration throughout the day.



## THE MONTH THAT WAS

### Delhi My Love

An exhibition by Krishnendu Chatterjee, *Delhi My Love*, was showcased at the India Habitat Center in New Delhi, from 1-31 March. Chatterjee's photographs shows his endless admiration for Delhi and its people.

### Sunil Janah—Vintage Photographs, 1940-1960

Tasveer and the Swaraj Art Archive held an exhibition of prominent photojournalist Sunil Janah, at the Sua House in Bengaluru, from 6-27 March. The exhibited images was a part of a larger show, originally curated by Ram Rahman, from the Swaraj Art Archive's collection.

➔ A photograph shot by Sunil Janah, which was on display, as part of a collaboration between Tasveer and Swaraj Art Archive.



Sunil Janah

### FOCUS Photography Festival

The Mumbai-based photography festival, was held from 12-26 March. This year, the theme was *Crossover*, and featured 30 exhibitions from Indian and international photographers. Pa Madhavan, Executive Director of the Goa Centre for Alternative Photography, curated the different exhibitions. Asef Ali Mohammad, Werner Anselm Buhre, Denis Bernier and Ajit Bhadoriya, were some of the photographers who showcased their work,

### Urban Reflections

Well known photojournalist Chandu Mhatre showcased his work at the Arpana Caur Academy of Fine Arts in New Delhi, from 13-23 March. A well known photojournalist, Mhatre's exhibition was a departure from his photojournalistic work. In *Urban Reflections*, he chronicled how Mumbai has changed under the impact of globalisation and economic liberalisation.

### Bajatey Rao

The exhibition took place from 14-26 March, and was curated by Aditya Arya, in collaboration with the India Photo Archive Foundation and the Neel Dongre Awards and Grants for Excellence in Photography. Six photographers—Sujatro Ghosh, Sujata Khanna, Vinit Gupta, Richa Bhavanam, Raj Lalwani and Nirvair Singh Rai, were commissioned to photograph the diminishing brass bands from one assigned city. Their work was exhibited at the India International Center in New Delhi.

WEBSITE



[www.exposure.co](http://www.exposure.co)

Exposure is a beautiful platform for photographers seeking to upload their work in a minimalist and aesthetically pleasing manner. Everything is customisable on the website. You can drag and drop photos into your browser, which appear as full-bleeds, and even personalise the headers and body text within your post. In the end, the user is left with a lovely clean combination of visuals and typography.

Exposure allows you to sign up for free, and you can even upload up to three stories. If you want more from the website, then it will cost you USD 9 (approx. Rs. 560) per month. It doesn't seem too bad, considering that it gives you a variety of benefits like creating a unique domain for yourself, a statistical report of your profile's performance, password protected posts and a bunch of other features.

Scott Kelby and several other professional photographers have created their profiles on Exposure. The way I see it is, if it is good enough for them, then it is good enough for me!

— Written by Conchita Fernandes

## Nikon Moves in to the Medical Devices Space

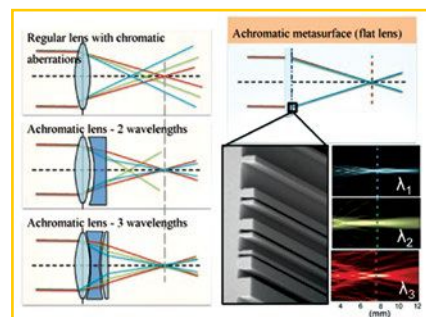
With a USD 400 million (approx. Rs. 2500 crore) purchase of retinal imaging firm Optos, Nikon has moved in to the medical sector. Optos is the market leader in retinal imaging and its technology produces images that cover more than 80% of the retina. The group describes the huge potential in this segment stating, "285 million people are estimated to be visually-impaired, while 80% of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured". Nikon sees this purchase as an important step in its long-term growth.

## Flat Elements to Make Lenses Smaller

A team at Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences has developed a method for making lenses flat. This may drastically reduce the size and weight of camera lenses in the future. The team originally made a breakthrough in 2012, when it used metal nano antennas, but has since switched to silicon.

Using tiny silicon antennas positioned on glass components, the lens can redirect light that reaches the surface of the lens rather than of relying on refraction. The Harvard team claims that with its invention, "a thin disc using these antennas will be able to achieve the same task as

three large regular elements used in regular lenses".



The lens design is able to focus light for three different wavelengths with no need to increase the lens thickness.

Image Source: Harvard SEAS

BOOK REVIEW

**Title:** Early Bombay Photography  
**Authors:** Susan Haggood  
**ISBN:** 978-81-89995-92-8  
**Publisher:** Mapin Publishing and Contemporary Arts Trust, Mumbai  
**Price:** Rs. 1950

## Reminiscing Through the Streets of Bombay

There is a line on the inside flap of the book that says, "... Bombay was the first Indian city where the photographic needs of the public—including more affluent indigenous Indians as well as British—were catered to." Considering this was in the 1850s, it is safe to say this was impressive. The flap further tells you that Bombay had more practitioners of the art than anywhere else in Asia!

The book goes on to showcase the works of various 'indigenous' Indians like Hurrichand Chintamon, Narayan Daji, Sivshanker Narayan, Shapoor N Bhedwar and Raja Deen Dayal, as well as British practitioners like Samuel Bourne, the founder of India's oldest surviving photo studio, and Edward Taurines amongst others.

It is a fascinating look into early Bombay and the way of life through the eyes of the inhabitants. Its features street scenes, Maharajas, artists, tribes, bazaars, children. The cover itself has a English teacher or 'mistress' surrounded by female pupils of the Government Normal School, Bombay. What makes the book even more interesting is the running dialogue Susan Haggood has with the viewer, peppered with anecdotes like the time Hurrichand Chintamon was asked by *Harper's Weekly* to contribute pictures of a 'Hindu ascetic floating in the air and of jugglers performing feats that could not be explained by Western scientists.' 'Bombay' lovers, photography practitioners, history buffs or anyone really, this one's for you.



— Written by Natasha Desai

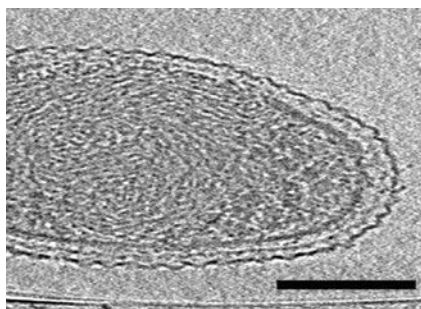
## A Snapshot of the World's Smallest Life Form

The grey glitchy looking image you see here is in fact an ultra small bacterial cell. The image was created recently using cryo-electron tomography by scientists from UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. It shows the internal structure of these cells with a dense inner section and a complex cell wall.

According to scientists, these are probably as small as life forms can get on planet earth. The cells have an average volume of 0.009 cubic microns.

Any smaller and the cells won't be able to store enough material to sustain life. To put it in perspective, a single human hair is about as large as 1,50,000 of these bacteria. "These newly described

ultra-small bacteria are an example of a subset of the microbial life on earth that we know almost nothing about," says UC Berkeley professor Jill Banfield.



To give the image a sense of scale the black bar has been added, which 100 nanometers.

Image Source: Berkley Labs

## Prof. Malushte Unveils Biographical Photobook

Professor Shreekant Malushte's book titled *Asa Mi-Tasa Mi* was launched on March 16 in Mumbai. In this book, Malushte portrays his stay at his hometown, his education and his work as a teacher and professor.

The book also shows his involvement as an actor in various dramas, and his contributions to the medium of photography in India. In attendance at the function were Padmashri winner Madhu Mangesh Karnik, Dr Aroon Titekar, former Editor of LokSatta, Dr Avinash Supe (Dean, KEM Hospital) and writer Ashok Bendkhale.

### LOOK WHO'S SHOOTING

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**Mithilesh Choubey** enjoys making pictures at weddings, street photography and also documenting his travels. In 2013, he had his work exhibited at the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society.

## Discovering the Irony in India's Cities

Photographer Mithilesh Choubey recently became the recipient of the National Award from the Lalit Kala Academy, as a part of the 56th National Exhibition of Art 2014-2015. He won for his image titled *Resting in Peace*.

He shot the photograph when he was visiting the Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi, a place that is the embodiment of the Hindu philosophy of *Moksha*, a way to gain freedom from the vicious cycle of life and death.

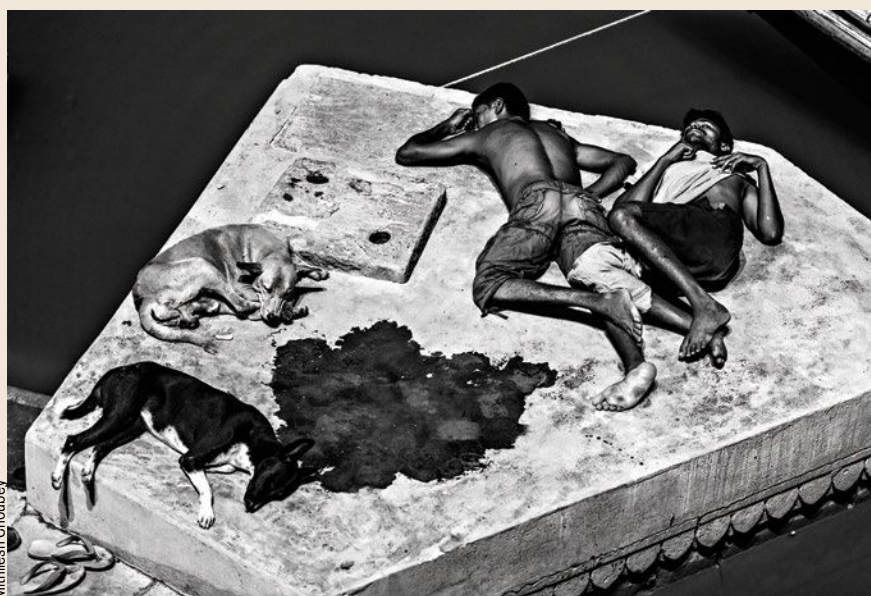
Although he was carrying his camera gear, Mithilesh did not want to make any images of the burning bodies that he encountered. Instead, he simply wanted to sit quietly and absorb the general activities of the area.

However, after spending over an hour walking around, he and his friend arrived at a platform overlooking the Ganga River. It was here that he noticed two men sleeping next to two dogs. "It immediately occurred to me that the two individuals have come to sleep at a place where everyone else comes to rest in peace," he says.

Since it was close to midnight, Mithilesh found it difficult to shoot the image under the extremely low light conditions. Nevertheless, he managed to capture this shot, which he later converted to black and white.

— Written by Conchita Fernandes

**"I believe that a photograph should be composed in such a way that it induces a certain emotion within the person, when he looks at it for the first time."**



Mithilesh Choubey

📌 When asked why he chose to convert his image to black and white, Mithilesh immediately quoted Ted Grant—"When you photograph people in color, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in black and white, you photograph their souls!"

## World Press Photo Revokes Winning Series

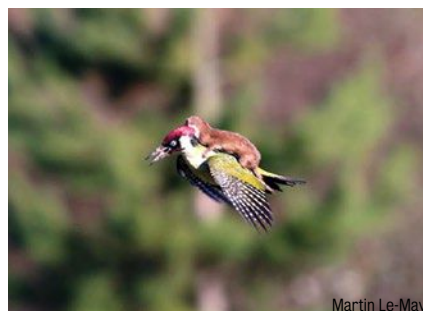
Giovanni Troilo's first-prize winning entry in the *Contemporary Issues* category was disqualified by the World Press Photo, for photographing staged scenes and falsifying the location information. The prize in this category now goes to the second place winner, Giulio di Sturco, for his series *Chollywood*. Tomas van Houtryve's series *Blue Sky Days* is now in second place.



Giovanni Troilo

## Weasel Riding on a Flying Woodpecker Goes Viral

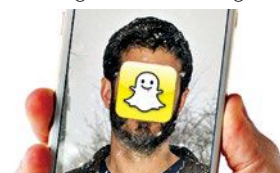
Amateur photographer and birding enthusiast Martin Le-May was able to capture this incredible moment of a weasel mid-flight on a woodpecker, while he was out taking a walk in London. He says that he heard "a distressed squawk before seeing the woodpecker's struggle for life as the weasel clung to its back". The image immediately prompted a debate regarding its authenticity. However, several wildlife experts have claimed that the occurrence is possible.



Martin Le-May

## The Images from this Project Will Disappear!

Renowned Magnum photographer Alec Soth will be using photo messaging service Snapchat for his next project. He wants to sell 3 editions of this project, titled *Disappear With Me*, which costs USD 100 (approx. Rs. 6200). Alex will give the buyer an opportunity to spend a few days conversing with him through Snapchat.



Over the course of the conversation, Soth promises to send the buyer 25 original photographs viewable for 10 seconds. The images "may vary from beautifully composed landscapes to simple shower selfies, depending on how the conversation develops and the nature of the narrative that emerges," reads the project's description.

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because, 'A picture is worth a thousand words'

**Passion to Profession**  
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Photograph by Tanu Jain, 1<sup>st</sup> Year student, SSP

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Symbiosis School of Photography (SSP) was established to cultivate talent and infuse passion for Fine Art Photography and Commercial Photography. With its innovative curriculum, exposure to national / international photographers, hands-on training and state-of-the-art infrastructure SSP aims to transform amateurs into powerful visual communicators. Take your first step towards making photography your career.

For more information log on to : [www.ssp.ac.in](http://www.ssp.ac.in) ★ Registration has started from 15th Feb. 2015.

Eligibility : 10 + 2 pass from any recognized board. Admission through GE & PI.

Vishal Bhende, Director



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## KEM Photo Contest Winners Announced

The winners of Diopter, a photography contest by the students of KEM Hospital and *Better Photography*, were declared on 4 March. The theme of the contest was *Street Photography-Friendship*. In addition to the grand prize winner, Shreyas Mandhare, five runners-up were also announced. They are Akshaj Sharma, Apoorva Bhaga, Dr Mansij Biswas, Mubasshir Sayed and Yash Kedia. All the winning images will be showcased on [www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in).



The grand prize winning entry shows two friends relaxing after a game of gully cricket.

Shreyas Mandhare

## Konica Minolta's Training Program for Customers

Konica Minolta conducted a Colour Management Seminar for its customers in Bangalore. The program shared details with customers on how they can maintain the consistency and reproduce accurate colour. It strove to solve the various queries from customers about file generations, formats and the final printed outputs. The seminar was aimed at teaching customers the best ways to create colour profiles and set parameters for their files.

## Contact Lenses, Now with 2.8x Wink Zoom

The sight device of the future, these contact lenses were developed by scientists at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale De Lausanne (EPFL) to aid the visually impaired. Each of the lenses gives a 2.8x zoom. This is done by using a thin reflective telescope embedded into the lens. Small mirrors are used to bounce light around, thus magnifying the view for the wearer. Despite this the lens remains 1.55mm thick.

The zooming function is controlled by winking. Winking the right eye gives users the 2.8x zoom, while winking the left eye takes you back to a 1x zoom. To do so, it uses a special light polarising technology that switches the contacts between the normal and telephoto mode.

A statement by the researchers says, "It's very important and hard to strike

a balance between function and the social costs of wearing any kind of bulky visual device. There is a strong need for something more integrated, and a contact lens is an attractive option."



Image Source: Eric Tremblay and Joe Ford (EPFL)

Despite fitting a zoom module into the lens, it still remains much tinier than a coin.

## What Would a 'True' Digital Rangefinder Be Like?

That is exactly what new startup Konost aims at figuring out with their cameras. Where these cameras will differ from the Leica digital rangefinders, is that the Leicas still use a mechanical range finder system of mirrors and prisms. Konost wants to create the rangefinder digitally by using a sensor that gives you a digital image overlay to aid focusing.

You won't be mistaken if you think this sounds a little too close to what Fujifilm X100 cameras can do. However, since

Konost won't launch till at least 2016, we still have a year to wait and find out the difference.

The cameras will launch as three versions—FF (Full frame), AP (APS-C) and Junior (1-inch sensor). The FF and AP cameras will have aluminum alloy construction, RAW capture, a Leica M lens mount, and ISO from 100–6400. Junior, on the

other hand, can only shoot JPEG, has a plastic build, features a fixed 35mm f/2 lens, and only has auto ISO.



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**YN600EX-RT**  
**Global First Aftermarket**  
**Radio Transmission Speedlite**



Recommend to use the YN600EX-RT

# GearGuide

## HOW WE TEST

### Product Categorisation

We first segregate products into categories for the purpose of equitability in testing. The DSLR is divided into entry-level, semi-professional and professional categories. For compacts, we distinguish between advanced and basic compact cameras. Similarly, we also test consumer and pro lenses, flashguns, printers, and other photographic accessories and gear.

### The Process

We primarily test for features, performance, build, ergonomics, warranty and support. While this remains constant, the weightage we give to these parameter differs from category to category, because different types of consumers have diverse expectations from products.

### Final Ratings

Under each main parameter, we list out hundreds of individual variables (for eg. colour accuracy for individual colours in different lighting, individual features, dynamic range, center-to-edge definition, light falloff, etc) against which we either give points or simply mark 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, we arrive at a score for that parameter, and then, the final score, denoted as a percentage. Additionally, based on the current pricing of a product, a star rating for 'Value for Money' is considered. Value for Money does not affect the final percentage, because prices for products change constantly.

### Our Seals of Approval

Any product that scores 80% or higher in individual tests gets 'BP Recommended'—a seal of approval from our team. In comparison tests, we also tag products as 'BP Best Performer' and 'BP Best Value for Money'.

### BP Excellence Awards

At the end of the calendar year, the highest rated products in each category automatically win the Better Photography Excellence Award. This is Better Photography's recognition of the very best products launched in the course of the year, and the companies that made them.



Sigma dp1 Quattro

# Improved, Not Better

With the redesigned Sigma dp1 Quattro, Aditya Nair finds significant improvements to technology, but a lack of joy that its predecessor brought.

The dp1 comes as the next installment in Sigma's Quattro series. As with the previous generation (called Merrill), the Quattros are fixed focal length advanced compact cameras that use the new APS-C Foveon sensors from Sigma. Within the series the only difference between the cameras is the lens.

The dp1 is the wide angle variant with a 19mm f/2.8 (28.5mm equivalent) lens. As all other aspects of the dpX cameras remains the same, this review focuses on the lens of the dp1. If you want to know more about the other features of the Quattro cameras you can read our review of the Sigma dp2 Quattro here, [www.betterphotography.in/?p=34405](http://www.betterphotography.in/?p=34405)

### Features

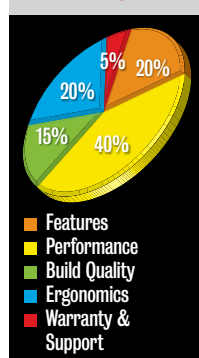
Besides the redesigned body, the first thing you notice with the dp1 is the significantly

improved AF speed. Compared to the dp1 Merrill, the AF speed has gone from being utterly deplorable to just bad, especially in low light. During the day the AF speed is quite good. Of course, by this I mean that it is slow but not the drive-you-insane Merrill kind of slow.

The high ISO performance has also improved by one stop, which is a huge deal considering that high ISO with the Merrills began at ISO 400. With the Quattros, ISO 800 is now usable. On a serious note, it is also quite a technological advancement. Sigma sensors are designed to give fantastic image quality by stacking the photodiodes on the sensor. This in turn produces a tremendous amount of noise. As a result, any improvement on the noise front is to be welcome.

It may still be a while before the Quattros can compete with regular cameras. But the dramatic improvements to focusing and

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



## TEST

**Canon SX710 HS**

The pocketable 30x zoom advantage

40



## TEST

**Sony DT 11-18mm f/4.5-5.6**

An inexpensive ultrawide purchase

42



## MICROTEST

**Sirui P-324S Monopod**

A welcome addition for the photographer on the go

44



**The overall optical quality of the lens is spectacular and it remains as sharp as ever.**

ISO give me hope for the future versions of these cameras.

**Handling**

The new Sigma design has been polarising to say the least. Unfortunately, I am on the side of users that dislike it. While the Merrills were designed like bricks, they were extremely comfortable to hold, the buttons were well laid out and single-handed shooting was possible.

With the new Quattro design, accessing most of the buttons with my right hand is quite difficult. Additionally, the lens is also bigger than the one on the Merrill and no longer at the center of the camera, making it tough to grip. Then there is the lens strap eyelet, which is placed in an uncomfortable way and comes between your fingers when you grip it. It could have been positioned on top of the camera, out of harm's way.

So, on the left hand side you have a large lens jutting forward, and on the right hand side you have a weird new grip that juts out towards the back. All of this leaves you

with a thoroughly unbalanced camera.

The design may have won it a couple of awards but it has also won it my resentment.

The overall handling experience does improve if you are shooting verticals. This may work in the favour of the dp2 and dp3 Quattros. Their 45mm and 70mm equivalent lenses are great for portrait photography. With the dp1, however, I didn't find the new design helping in any measurable way. It did, however, leave Sigma with some additional space on the top of the camera that was used for an additional dial.

**Performance**

The new Foveon sensor can shoot 19.6MP RAWs with an option of 39MP JPEGs.

This resolution is lower than what the Merrills were capable of, as a result of the change in sensor design. However, since it has resulted in better ISO performance, I think it is more than an acceptable trade off.

Unlike the Merrills, I did notice some amount of the occasional flare and also fighting with the lens on the dp1. This can

**WHAT'S IN THE BOX**

- Camera body
- Battery charger
- Two lithium ion battery packs
- Lens cap
- Shoulder strap
- Hot shoe cover
- USB cable
- AV cable
- Owner's manual
- Sigma Photo Pro 6 software download instructions

With the Merrills, I would have been weary of shooting in such lighting. However, that is no longer the case with the Quattros.  
Exposure: 1/250sec at f/13 (ISO 400)



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Center and edge sharpness of the lens is fantastic even at  $f/2.8$  and remains so throughout the aperture range. Exposure: 1/50sec at  $f/2.8$  (ISO 100)


be easily corrected using the Photo Pro 6 software, which you need to use to edit Sigma's proprietary X3F RAW files.

Like the Merrills, the dp1 has a leaf shutter which gives you the advantage of highspeed flash sync at fast shutter speeds. The downside to using a leaf shutter system is that the fastest aperture gets limited. As a result the widest aperture is still limited to  $f/2.8$ . Still, I would have really welcomed an  $f/1.4$  lens or at the least  $f/1.8$ .

### Conclusion

What made the Merrills remarkable was their price and the stunning medium format-like image quality they delivered

at lower ISOs. I absolutely loved the series and was willing to forgive its flaws purely for this reason. While the Quattro shows a huge improvement in many aspects like the ISO performance, processing power and autofocus, I was disappointed that there wasn't any major improvement in the image quality at ISOs 100 and 200.

Both the Merrill and Quattro series are designed for photographers looking for a compact camera that delivers stunning image quality, while being economical. Considering that the Merrills are still available (Rs. 36,000), at twice the price, I don't find the Quattros (Rs. 79,900) to be an exciting buy. 

### SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Sigma dp1 Quattro
MRP	Rs. 79,900
Sensor size	APS-C
Effective pixels, max. image size	29MP, 7680 x 3296 pixels
LCD	3-inch, 920k dots
Focal range	19mm (field of view similar to a 28.5mm lens)
ISO range	100-6400
Aperture range	$f/2.8-16$
Shutterspeed	30-1/2000sec
Metering modes	Evaluative Metering, Centre-weighted Average Metering, Spot Metering
File formats	JPEG, RAW
Hot shoe	Yes
Battery	Li-ion
Storage	SDHC, SDXC
Dimensions (W x H x D), weight	161.4 x 67 x 81.6mm, 395g

### PLUS

- Superior image quality
- Improved AF
- Usable ISO 800

### MINUS

- Larger lens that remains  $f/2.8$
- New design
- Lens hood sold separately

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b> 28mm equiv. extremely sharp lens, Foveon X3 sensor, few other significant features	14/20
<b>Performance</b> Improved AF speed, processing power & ISO performance, exceptional detail at low ISOs	36/40
<b>Build Quality</b> Metal body, sturdy built	13/15
<b>Ergonomics</b> Needs two-handed operation, awkward design that seems gimmicky	14/20
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b> One-year warranty	3/5

# OVERALL 80%

**Who should buy it?** Photographers looking for an economical camera that can deliver astounding image quality.

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**Value for Money** ★★★★★☆☆

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Canon PowerShot SX710 HS

# Pocketable Speedster

There's a new compact superzoom in town, in the form of the Canon PowerShot SX710 HS. Supriya Joshi puts it through its paces.

The latest iteration of Canon's PowerShot series is the SX710 HS, which was announced by the company back in January this year. The SX710 HS is the successor of the SX700 HS, which we saw at CP+ in Japan in 2014. Several key features seen in the SX700 HS have been brought back to the SX710 HS. Let's find out how the camera fares.

## Features

The SX710 features 30x zoom (25–750mm in 35mm parlance) in a compact body, 20.3MP CMOS sensor and 1080p video at 60p. Like the SX700, the SX710 features a 5-axis image stabilisation, which compensates for 2.5 stops. This, in combination with the DIGIC 6 image processor promised not only speed, but also sharp images at any focal length.

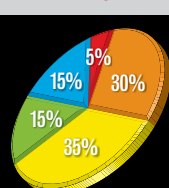
You can shoot multiple frames at a burst rate of 8fps, however, the focus and the metering will be locked on the first image you shoot in the series.

The camera features P, S, A, M modes along with a whole host of automatic modes like Hybrid Auto, which captures a four second video before each shot and combines them in a video montage. Another interesting feature, which we had first seen in Canon PowerShot N, is Creative Shot, which shoots a burst of images, and produces six images in different aspect ratios and filters. This is a fun mode to try out while making casual portraits with friends and family.

## Handling

Canon has packed in a 30x zoom lens in quite a portable body, while being lightweight, yet robust. A finger grip on

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

### WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- Canon PowerShot SX710 HS
- User's manual
- Charger
- Neck Strap
- 8GB SDHC card

the front of the camera body made it real easy to operate the camera even using one hand.

A button on the left of the camera controls the pop up flash. Right next to that button is another, the Zoom Framing Assist. How this works is that if you press the button while zoomed into a subject, it zooms back in, while superimposing a rectangle on the part of the subject that the full zoom range would have covered.

Where the camera truly succeeds, however, is its speediness. The SX710HS is very, very quick. Everything from powering up to zooming in to the complete telephoto end and even focusing happens in seconds. I had absolutely no trouble focusing on a subject at the extreme end of the telephoto range. The IS also controlled camera shake to a great extent.

## Performance

I quite enjoyed the shooting experience with this camera. The focal length truly makes this a multipurpose camera. Its low light performance is also quite good for a camera of this class. I shot many low light indoor photos at the complete telephoto end, and I would very rarely get out of focus or blurry shots.

Even in bright light, the camera produces good images with very minimal

noise reduction, and it handled chromatic aberrations fairly well.

The ISO performance is fairly ok, and the images are quite good up to ISO 400, beyond which the images are usable if you are not intending to print them in a large size.

Video recording was really good, and the 5-axis image stabilisation really shone through when I made movies. The aggressive camera shake you would expect from the telephoto end of such a zoom range was not present in the camera.

## Conclusion

The Canon PowerShot SX710 HS is quite an exciting camera but, it is virtually identical to its predecessor. Perhaps a RAW mode is wishful thinking, but basic features like a panorama mode, HDR capture and a touchscreen interface should have been added to the list of features in the camera. While I will still maintain that this is a really good superzoom compact, I do wonder why one would pick up this camera over the SX700?

The SX710 comes at a pricetag of Rs. 23,995. If you prefer zoom range over pocketability, you can also consider the Canon SX50 HS, which has 50x zoom and RAW shooting as well for Rs. 25,995. **BP**

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Canon PowerShot SX710 HS
MRP	Rs. 23,995
Sensor size, type	1/2.3-inch, CMOS
Resolution	20.3MP, 5184 x 3888 pixels
LCD	3-inch, 922k dots
Focal range	25–750mm
ISO range	Auto, ISO 80–1600
Aperture range	f/3.2–8.0
Optical zoom	30x
Metering modes	Evaluate, Center-weighted average, Spot
File formats	Still: JPEG, Video: MPEG-4
Battery	Lithium-Ion
Storage	SD, SDHC, SDXC
Dimensions (WxHxD)	112.7 x 65.8 x 34.8mm
Weight	269g

## FINAL RATINGS

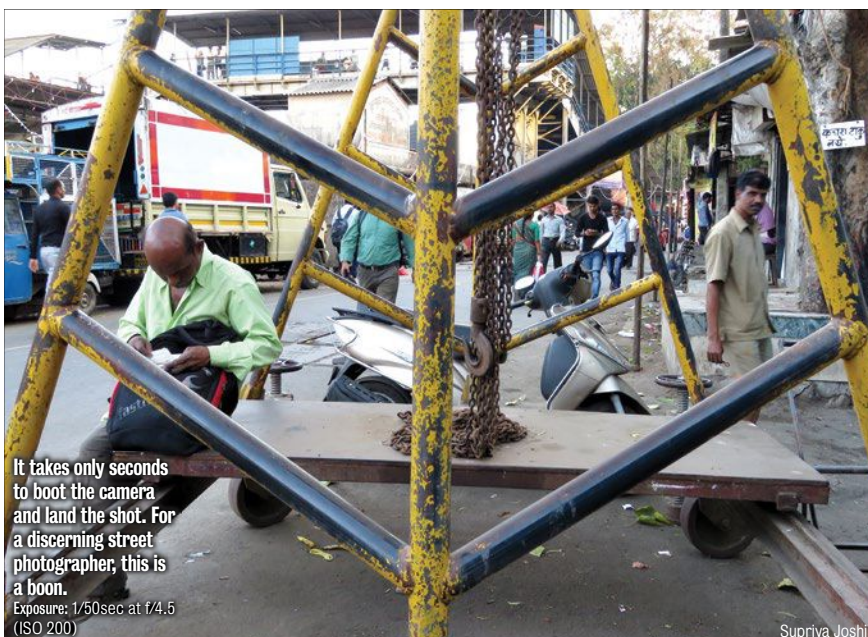
<b>Features</b> 30x zoom, 5-axis image stabilisation, no RAW	<b>24/30</b>
<b>Performance</b> Extremely speedy, average ISO performance, great video	<b>26/35</b>
<b>Build Quality</b> Lightweight, pocketable	<b>13/15</b>
<b>Ergonomics</b> Easy menu system, bright LCD screen, WiFi and NFC connectivity	<b>14/15</b>
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b> Large service network	<b>4/5</b>

**OVERALL 81%**

**Who should buy it?** Those who want to carry something portable on their travels without compromising on quality.

**Why?** The speedy camera will ensure that you don't miss important moments. Plus, the 5-axis image stabilisation will ensure that you make great videos as well.

**Value for Money** ★★★★★



It takes only seconds to boot the camera and land the shot. For a discerning street photographer, this is a boon.  
Exposure: 1/50sec at f/4.5 (ISO 200)

Supriya Joshi



Sony DT 11–18mm f/4.5–5.6

# Very Wide, Very Narrow

The Sony DT 11–18mm f/4.5–5.6 offers a narrow zoom range, but A-mount users may love its wide angle capabilities. Shridhar Kunte finds out.

This lens is not a new launch at all, the roots of the Sony DT 11–18mm f/4.5–5.6 lens go as far back as the year 2005. Tamron had launched a 11–18mm lens during the PMA show in those days, and just after about a year, Minolta merged with Sony. They came out with a new lens that matched all the specifications of Tamron's version for the Minolta mount (now the Sony A-mount). Sony brought the same lens back to the market with the A100, under their brand name, of course.

## Features

If you have a Sony A-mount DSLR, then this is the only wide angle offering from the manufacturer. The lens features four special elements, out of which three are aspherical and one is an ED element. Overall, the lens consists of 15 elements arranged in 12 groups. While the lens offers a 7-bladed aperture diaphragm unit, it doesn't really make much of a difference as wide angle lenses offer larger depth of field.

At all focal lengths, the lens offers a minimum focusing distance of 0.25m, and

at this distance, the magnification ratio comes up to be 1:8. This can be considered fairly decent, given the wide focal length.

The lens accepts 77mm filters and the front element does not rotate while focusing. This is quite handy for those wanting to shoot landscapes along with circular polarisers.

## Handling

We coupled the lens with the Alpha A77M2, and the combination felt quite light and well-balanced. Despite the fact that the lens weighs only 360g, it feels pretty sturdy. However, a polycarbonate barrel construction makes it look and feel quite average.

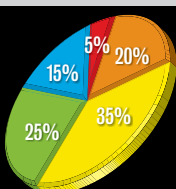
### PLUS

- Distortion well controlled
- Hood supplied

### MINUS

- Noisy focus
- Soft corners
- No FTM

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Sony DT 11–18mm f/4.5–5.6
MRP	Rs. 44,990
Lens construction	15 elements/12 groups
Max. Aperture	f/4.5
Diaphragm blades	7
Filter diameter	77mm
Dimensions	80.4mm x 83mm
Weight	360g



Shridhar Kunte

The distance scale has metres marked in white, and feet marked in orange, which is helpful. There is no DOF scale, but since it is a wide angle lens, one can do without it.

The zoom ring is placed close to the camera body and is only slightly wider than the focusing ring. This offers better grip, especially while shooting at slow shutter speeds. On the other hand, I would have preferred the focusing ring to have been narrower as it rotates during autofocus. A narrower focusing ring would also be ergonomically better as it would allow for more space between the two rings. This would mean smoother functioning of the focusing ring during autofocus, and would also minimise the chances of damage.

The overall rotation of the focusing ring is about 90°, in which it covers the entire focusing distance. The zoom ring, on the other hand, does not need to be twisted a lot to cover the entire focal length.

## Performance

While I tested the lens on the latest Sony body, the AF mechanism employed on the lens is similar to the ones found in Nikon D-type lenses. The AF motor is built in to the camera body and mechanically couples with the lens to achieve focus, which slows

downs focusing and also makes it louder. This AF noise is easily picked up by the inbuilt microphone during video.

The lens hood does not reduce flare as it should, and you can see a hint of the sun even when it is at the corner of the frame. Additionally, the onboard flash casts a noticeable shadow at all focal lengths, except 18mm, even without the lens hood.

In terms of sharpness and contrast, the lens is excellent across all focal lengths, but the best balance is achieved at f/5.6. However, if you are looking to avoid light falloff at the corners, then my advice is to use f/8 at all focal lengths.

While distortion is well controlled, some barrel distortion is visible at 11mm, but becomes less apparent 14mm onwards.

## Conclusion

Priced at Rs. 44,990, the Sony DT 11-18mm f/4.5-5.6 is the only wide angle zoom lens for Sony's Alpha series of APS-C cameras. The cheapest option available in the market for Sony users, it is a good ultrawide companion to the standard DT 18-70mm kit lens. If you are on a tight budget, then despite some distortion and light falloff, it is a lens worth considering. But there are also third-party options available, if you are willing to increase your budget.

➔ The lens exhibits excellent overall sharpness at f/5.6 and distortion at the edges is well controlled.  
Exposure: 1/50sec at f/5.6 (ISO 3200)

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b>	16/20
Close focusing distance of 28cm, no FTM	
<b>Performance</b>	30/35
Less vignetting and distortion, noisy AF	
<b>Build Quality</b>	20/25
Made up of polycarbonate, feels average	
<b>Ergonomics</b>	11/15
Light, MF ring rotates during AF operation	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	3/5
Wide service network, two-year warranty	

# OVERALL 80%

**Who should buy it?** Sony APS-C DSLR users looking to shoot lot of interiors and architecture as this offers good wide angle range.

**Why?** The lens offers a constant minimum focusing distance of 0.25m and distortion is well controlled.

**Value for Money** ★★★★★

## Kingston 256GB Class 10 UHS-I SDXC Card

## No Dearth of Space

Space is never an issue with the new Kingston 256GB SDXC card, finds Aditya Nair.

This month I was testing the Sigma dp1 Quattro, a camera capable of producing some mammoth file sizes. However, since I was also testing the Kingston 256GB SDXC card this problem went largely unnoticed. It is the first card in Kingston's lineup that breaks the 256GB barrier.

While the card doesn't break any records, its features are quite decent. It is capable of reaching read speeds of up to 90MB/s and write speed of up to 45MB/s. This means that you should have no problem recording Full HD at high frame rate. The company claims that you should be able to record about 1200 minutes of 1080p footage. It is able to transfer files to a computer quickly as well.

For 4k video, however, you may need a faster card depending on the bitrate at which you shoot. While the company claims that it can also be used for 3D video, we weren't able to test it and have no way of verifying what resolution of 3D video it is capable of.

The card is temperature resistant from -25°C to 85°C. Additionally, Kingston as a brand is quite reliable and so is this card. That said, the major drawback is that its competitors are either far cheaper or similarly priced with faster specs. While the Indian pricing is yet to be announced, the card is priced at around USD 285 (approx. Rs. 18,000).



### SPECIFICATIONS

- Product Name: Kingston 256GB Class 10 UHS-I SDXC
- Class 10 / UHS-I
- Max. Read Speed: 90 MB/s
- Max. Write Speed: 45 MB/s
- Built-in Write Protect Switch
- Lifetime warranty

**Product source:**  
Kingston Technology,  
Liaison Office, 703,  
Quantum Tower,  
Chincholi, Off S. V.  
Road, Malad West,  
Mumbai - 400064  
Tel: +91 22 28448400

### RATING



## Sirui P-324S Carbon Fiber Photo/Video Monopod

## The Mega Monopod

Natasha Desai discovers how practical the handling of the Sirui P-324S is.

Monopods usually serve as a substitute to tripods when you need portability and mobility. In that respect, the bulky and long body of the Sirui P-2324S does not live up to expectations. But, that is probably the only negative I can find in the monopod.

The Sirui comes with three foldable feet for extra stabilisation at the base. Above that it houses a base ball head allowing the monopod to tilt 20° in any direction, with an adjustment knob. This is an especially handy feature, when shooting video.

What I found extremely useful about the monopod was the ability to detach the base ball head and feet further, for low angle or table top photography. Also, this allows you to use the monopod without the feet. The rubber spike works fine on flat surfaces and can be replaced with a metal one when outdoors.

With a Nikon D90 attached to the Sirui K-30X ball head and extended to its maximum height of 175cm, the sturdy carbon fiber body proved its worth. Additionally, there exists a lock that allows you extremely smooth 360° panning.

Sirui seems to have thought about it all when it comes to this tripod. At Rs. 18,900 I think this monopod has something for everyone and would be a smart addition to any photographer's kit.

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Product Name: Sirui P-324S Carbon Fiber Monopod
- MRP: Rs. 18,900
- Load Capacity: 10kg
- Max Height: 175cm
- Min Height: 72.5cm
- Weight: 1.3kg
- Leg Sections: 4



**Product source:**  
Foto Centre Trading  
Private Limited,  
Tel: +91 22 22700909  
/ 22701010

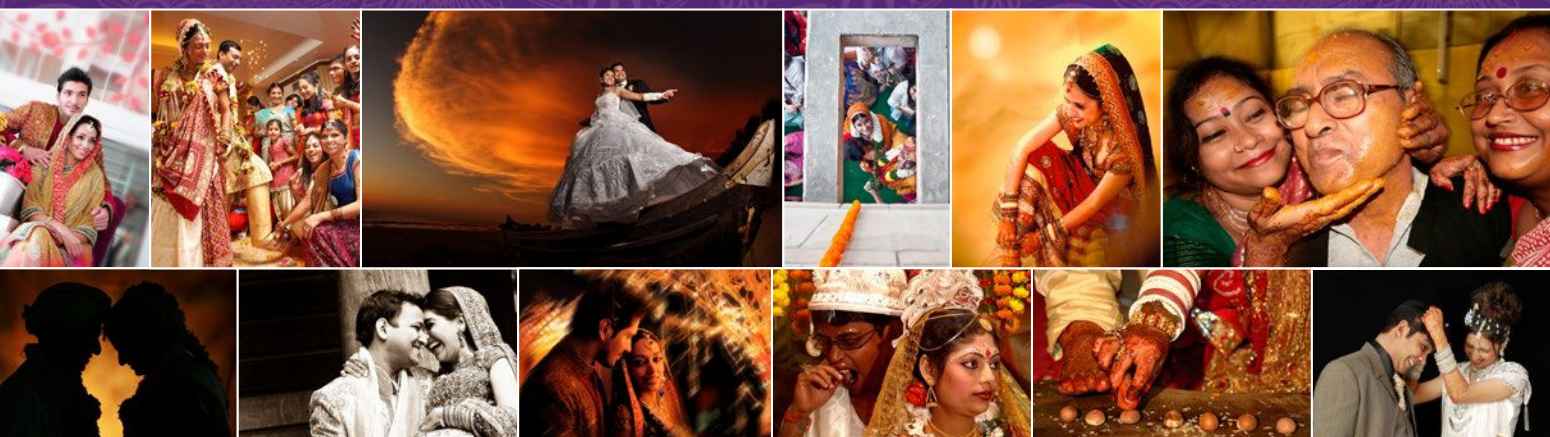
### RATING



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# Cellphone Photography

## THE BLACK & WHITE ROUTE

David Ingraham talks about the evolution of his visual style

- Using Instagram, VSCO and Snapseed for B&W conversions
- App Reviews: Hueless and the Zone System Analyzer

**“The head-and-shoulders style of portraiture has been a traditionally powerful way of imagemaking, but these days, it seems to be more of a trend.”**



## The Difficult Art of Portraiture

Often, I find myself struggling with portraiture. I admire photographers who can simply walk up to their subject and make a portrait. While I am afraid of approaching people, part of my hesitation stems from the desire to not disturb whatever it is that they are doing, even if it is simply standing and staring into space. Besides that, I have this inordinate fear that I will not be able to render someone's personality accurately into a photograph. And so, I was heartened to find a quote where Henri Cartier-Bresson speaks about his struggles with portraiture, “The most difficult thing for me is a portrait. You have to try and put your camera between the skin of a person and his shirt.”

While I appreciate the head-and-shoulders style of portraiture, it seems far too direct to me, and these days, it seems more of a trend than a method of artistic expression. Recently, I had the fortune of speaking to Richard Kalvar, a Magnum photographer renowned for his uncanny ability to find humour on the streets and in the most mundane of places. He was of the opinion that the *National Geographic* style of portraiture has kind of spoiled us all. “I find those images to be something out of a catalogue. Undoubtedly, the *Afghan Girl* is a powerful portrait, but it is so because she has this ‘deer-in-the-headlights’ sort of shocked look, and also a bit of anger at the intrusion of her space. However, most of the spin-offs today lack that sort of an insight.” It is this sort of trap that I wish to avoid, and I hope that someday, I can make a portrait that truly captures the essence of a person.

**Ambarin Afsar**

ambarin.afsar@betterphotography.in / Instagram: @batsaboutcats



### Untitled

by Masoud Gharai

Our upcoming issue will feature the works of this unique street photographer from Iran

Find out how three free photo editing apps can help you convert your images to B&W

Turn to page 52

Amit Mehra speaks finding something within nothingness

Turn to page 54

Cover photograph by David Ingram

“ As time passes by and you look at portraits, the people come back to you like a silent echo. A photograph is a vestige of a face, a face in transit. ”

**HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON**

Known as the father of photojournalism, Cartier-Bresson has inspired generations of photographers with not just his street photography style, but also his photobooks, monographs and of course, the concept of The Decisive Moment.

Hueless

# The Grey Escape

When monochrome is just a filter away, what is the point of a dedicated B&W camera app? In **Hueless** lies the answer, discovers **Aditya Nair**.

**T**here are days when you don't want to think too much... when a world devoid of colour seems easier. Perhaps you miss the old days of film. Or, you are one of those people who only shoot monochrome with their phones. There are many reasons to see in black and white. Yet the advice given to photographers is always shoot in colour then convert it, if you must. While I maintain that this is good advice, for Hueless, I will gladly break the rule.

## These Aren't the Filters You are Looking for

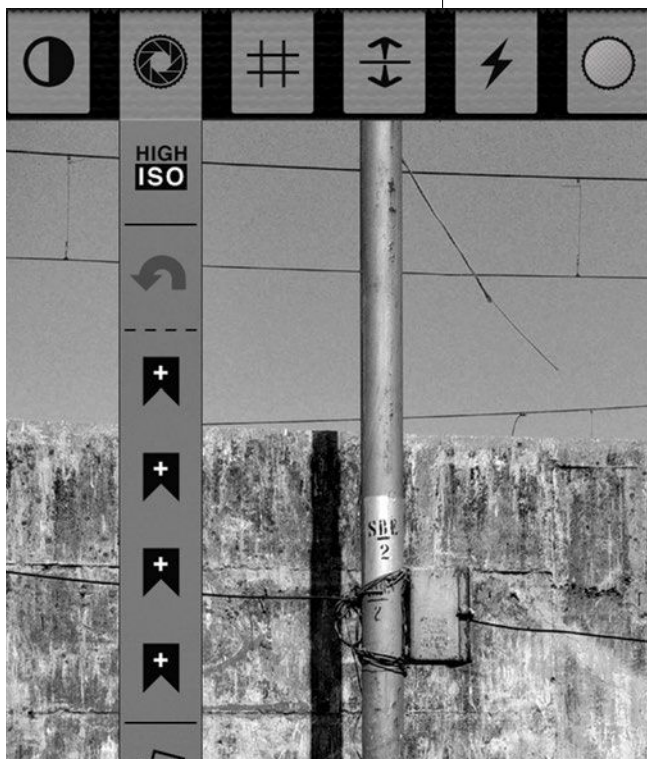
I must admit that I was tricked into downloading this app by the colossal

being in the clouds that we call the internet. My curiosity spiked when I read headlines that seemed to suggest 'Fantastic Photographic App with Five B&W Filters.'

I had to try the app for myself to see how the filters would vary from what other filter apps gave you as options. As it turns out the five filters are—Red, Yellow, Orange, Green and Blue. Hueless isn't a filter app but rather a camera app that lets you recreate the experience of B&W photography with real life filters on your iOS device. You can't use images from the Camera Roll and edit them. I suppose I wasn't the only one fooled because the app's description now has a disclaimer that points this out.

⚡ Each filter has an intensity slider that goes from 0 to 100.

⚡ You can save your favourite combinations as presets for easy access.



All photographs by Aditya Nair

**For lovers of the black and white medium there is no better app to be bought.**

### Using the Hueless

The app has a simple layout and a few basic controls. You can select one of the five filters or go for the regular monochrome look with the No Filter option. There is also a slider for exposure and a few flash options—Flash, Auto, Lamp. Manual controls and options for adding grain (there is a High ISO mode) and vignetting are missing.

On screen you get to see the effects of your choices in real time before you shoot the image. If you feel like the screen is too cluttered with options, you can just tap on the H button in the bottom left corner and get rid of all the settings

### Choosing the Correct Filter


To explain the way each filter works, let's take the example of using the Blue filter. Imagine a picturesque landscape with a vivid blue sky before you. Once you have the filter selected, an intensity slider pops up. If you reduce the slider to zero, the blue sky will darken up. On the other hand, if you increase the intensity to 100, it will cause the sky to go near white. Each filter effects its corresponding colour in a similar fashion.

However, what makes choosing these filters more fun is the effect that they have on

other colours in the image. The Yellow filter gives pleasing skin tones. Red can be used to get rather dramatic dark skies. Green is useful when you want to turn foliage white.

### Why Buy the App?

For one, it shows you the effects of the filter in real time rather than adding it later on. It also lets you shoot lossless TIFFs. However, the main reason to buy the app is because it is quite addictive in its simplicity.

The longer it remains on your phone, the more you will want to shoot in B&W. To quote one of my favourite photographers today, Richard Koci Hernandez, "This is certainly the app that Ansel Adams would have on his homescreen." 

### AT A GLANCE

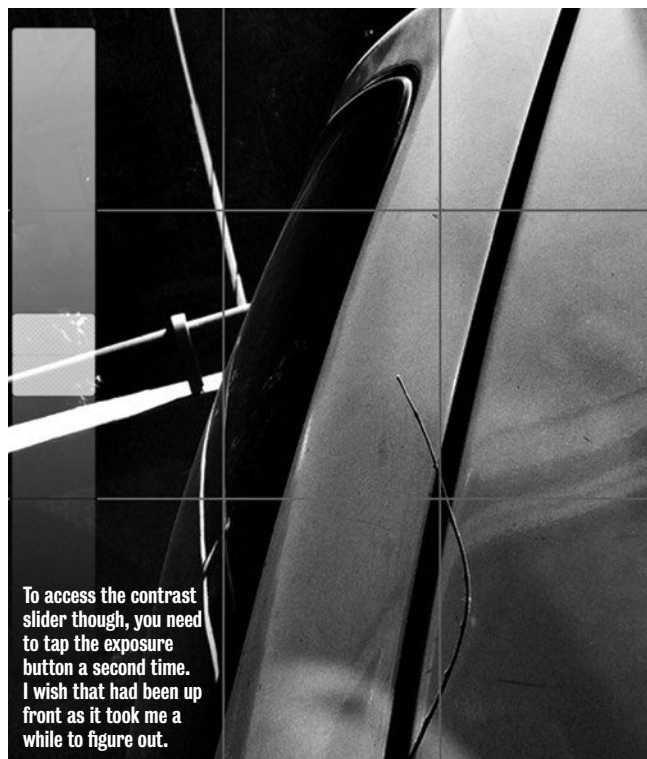
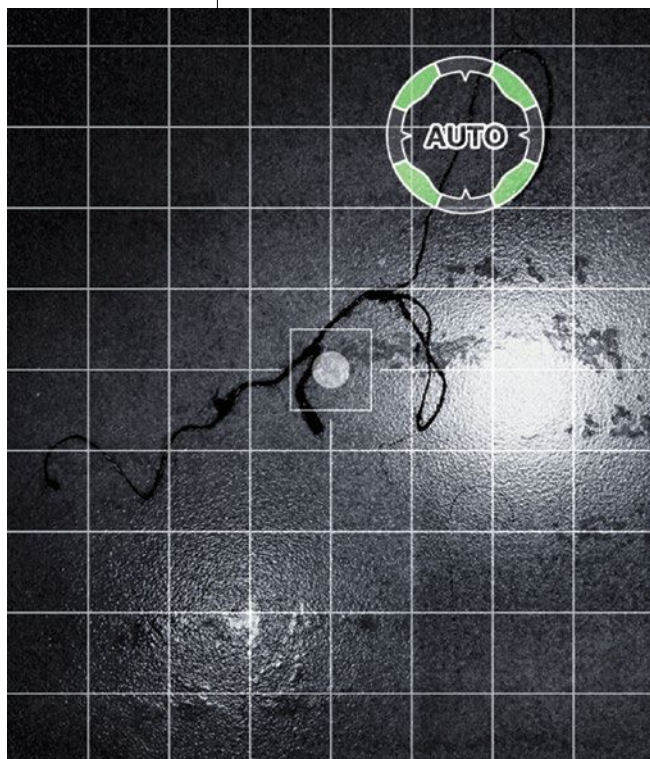
<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	iOS 5.0 or later, Rs. 120
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	Shows the effects of B&W filters live
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	A few features like grain and vignetting could be useful
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	To enjoy a minimalistic camera app designed for B&W photography

### FINAL RATINGS

**89%**

<b>FEATURES</b>	Adequate controls, separate exposure and focus lock	<b>22/25</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	Can save lossless TIFFs, no lag	<b>26/30</b>
<b>EASE OF USE</b>	Simple intuitive interface	<b>32/35</b>
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b>	Quick and instant	<b>9/10</b>

**⬇ You can control focus and exposure together by a single or an individual tap by tapping on two different parts of the screen.**



## Zone System Analyzer

# Once You're In the Zone

Aditya Nair tests the Zone System Analyser, and uncovers an exposure correction tool that is great for beginners who are looking to experiment.

With digital photography, you should be concerned with image data between Zone 3 to Zone 7. Anything outside these zones may be too dark or too blown out to recover.

50

What would it be like to have Ansel Adams sitting next to you pointing out exposure errors before you begin editing? That's pretty much what this app tries to do by using the Zone System created by Adams and Fred Archer. This system is a means of getting the right exposure even in tricky lighting situations.

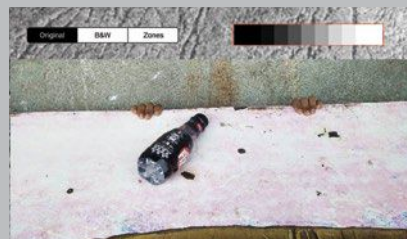
## The Basics of the Zone System

The system divides every scene into 11 zones from 0 (pure black) to 10 (pure white) in greyscale. Each zone varies from the next by 1-stop of exposure and Zone 5 is considered to be the midtone (18% grey). Using the app, you can convert your images to a greyscale map that shows you the zones that different parts of the frame fall into. This map can be saved and later used to fix exposure errors.

Cameras meter a scene and choose exposure settings for 18% grey (Zone 5). However, as a result, lighter or darker shades don't get reproduced accurately. Imagine, for example, a dark red or pale yellow shade in the photo. While it should fall in the earlier and later zones respectively, the camera will end up giving it a neutral Zone 5 exposure

🔗 The app is a fair bit of nerdy fun. Just seeing my images as a greyscale map alone was quite interesting.

## Selecting One of the Zones



There is a bar on top that shows all the 11 Zones as a gradation (highlighted in red). It lets you highlight portions of an image in a particular Zone by tapping on the corresponding shade of grey.

setting. This is when the map created by the app will come in handy.

## How the App Works?

The overall design of the app is fairly simple. It is divided into three tabs—Original, B&W and Zone. Once the Zone tab is selected, tap the image to get the Zone Options menu. Here, the upper and lower limit for each zone can be fine tuned.

## Should You Buy It?

It is a good tool for beginners to use when they are correcting the exposure in their photos. I just don't think I would use the app regularly. While I can be finicky when editing and work on various parts of the images separately, I don't see myself referring to a map such as this one too often. 📷

## AT A GLANCE

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	iOS 6.0 and above, not available on other operating systems, Rs. 60
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	The creation of the greyscale map, ability to highlight individual zones
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	Crashes occasionally with images that have lots of tones
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	Good exposure tool for beginners

## FINAL RATINGS

80%

<b>FEATURES</b>	Controls to set limits in each zone, no unnecessary features	23/25
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	Lacks ability to tweak image exposure within the app	25/30
<b>EASE OF USE</b>	Simple interface, easy to understand	24/35
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b>	Quick and instant	8/10



All photographs by Aditya Nair

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With Snapseed, I first put this image through a black and white filter. Then, I used the Retrolux option which created light leaks and allowed me to add a frame.

# Magical Single Hues

Black and white cellphone photographs can be processed with just as much control as DSLR photos. Using three popular free photo editing apps, **Natasha Desai** tells you everything you can do to carve your niche in the genre.



➦ What I like the most about VSCO is its Fade option. This gives the image a slightly more flat and dreamy feel.

There are several ways of creating exceptional black and white imagery on your cellphone today. If you think that only the paid apps are able to provide the kind of stunning results you yearn for, think again. VSCOCam, Snapseed and Instagram are three of the most popular free photo editing apps available today and are more than adept to help you realise your vision.

### Filled to the Brim

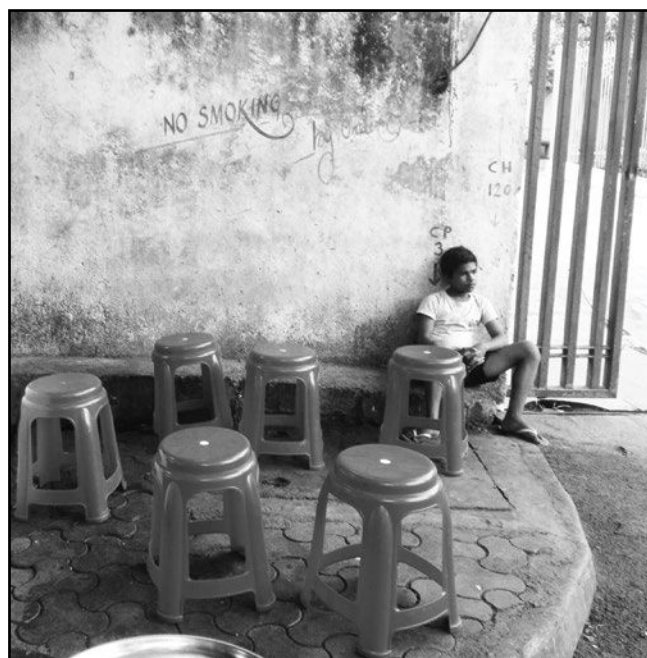
All three apps come with pre-loaded black and white filters. Instagram lets you choose between two filters—Inkwell, which has a slightly darker feel to it than Willow. Snapseed comes with six filters that are incredibly good. They include a basic monochrome look, a dark noir feel and everything in between. Additionally, it offers add-on frames and an insane amount of additional filters to make your images look anything from grungy to vintage. On the other hand, VSCOCam originally comes with three, but you have the option of buying more black and white filter packs.

### Other Options

For dedicated black and white filter apps, you could use Black and White Camera Pro (Android) and Camera Noir (iOS). Apart from applying a filter, you have the option of shooting in black and white with your native camera app. Or, you could also use apps like Hipstamatic and Hueless.

### Exercise Control

Furthermore, all three apps offer you a great amount of control over the basics like exposure and contrast. In Instagram, you can take the Inkwell and Willow filters to a whole new level with inbuilt editing tools. VSCOCam and Snapseed even offer excellent highlight and shadow recovery, and VSCO also gives you option of adding in a fade effect. Snapseed wins in this respect with the option of selective



adjustment and a host of other options like HDR, Drama, Center Focus and Tilt Shift.

### Let it Grain

One of the most utilised features when creating black and white images is the addition of grain. Snapseed and VSCOCam both give you the option of adding in as much as you want. However, one man's grain may be another's noise.

I personally prefer the aesthetic of VSCOCam's filters, but, there is an undeniable flexibility in functions that comes with Snapseed. However, if you like simplicity then Instagram is the way to go. It is ultimately, a matter of preference.

➦ With Instagram's Inkwell, you are able to produce a classic black and white image, without any additional distractions to it.

➦ This was the original colour photograph that was processed through the three apps.



All photographs by Natasha Desai



Amit Mehra

# Finding Something Out of Nothing

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Amit Mehra

For a serious photographer, the shooting process often revolves around the proverbial 'moment'.

In the process of doing so, one ends up looking for, and looking at certain kinds of subjects and actions. It is a difficult, but rewarding approach and I constantly strive to do the same, but recently, I have also been attracted to a certain kind of stillness and silence, one that is almost devoid of any momentousness.

It's strange to explain this in words, but then, some photos just cannot be described. Maybe, that is what is intriguing about them. There may be nothing happening in the frame, no action as one may expect, and yet, what

one sees becomes a photograph that is able to trace the visual notes of one's *roznaama*, or daily diary. In a strange way, it is about finding something within nothingness.

I'm not talking about the kind of banality that is there in photos shot by casual cameraphone users. After all, the most common use of cellphone photography is to upload visual status updates on social media. But if one combines this seemingly casual device with the rigour of serious photography, there is magic waiting to be found, all around. There are plenty of tiny, unnoticed elements within the mundane goings-on of life. An open mind, a curious eye and an alert response are all we need... ■

*Constantly balancing the worlds of commercial and documentary photography, Amit describes himself saying, "I'm like an octopus who likes to deal with different things at the same time. You can call me a schizophrenic photographer." The moments in this monthly diary are excerpts from his ongoing work titled 'Roznaama'.*



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### David Ingraham

- He plays the drums in a Celtic rock and roll band called the *Young Dubliners*.
- His work has been presented in numerous publications such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *Burn Magazine*, *Black & White Magazine*, and also in the *The Art of iPhone Photography*.
- He is also part of an international photography group called *Tiny Collective*, and has exhibited his work worldwide.
- He enjoys movies by Stanley Kubrick, Ernst Ingmar Bergman and Wim Wenders.

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David has always been more intrigued by the aesthetics of a good photograph. He is more interested in pictures that capture a certain mood or feeling, than one that tells a specific story in a compelling sense.

# The Black & White Route

David Ingraham talks to Conchita Fernandes about what inspires him about photography, and how his style has evolved over the years.

### FIND DAVID HERE!

- Instagram: @dayzandconfuzd
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ingraham.photo](http://www.facebook.com/ingraham.photo)
- Website: [www.davidingraham.zenfolio.com](http://www.davidingraham.zenfolio.com)

Inspired by Led Zeppelin's famous track *Dazed and Confused*, David Ingraham saw it as a fitting title for his soon to be Instagram account. But there was more to the name. At the time he was going through what he calls a mini mid-life crisis. He was unsure about the direction that his

career was taking, and somehow 'dazed and confused' captured how he felt at the time.

However, Instagram was not what got him interested in cellphone photography. It was in fact an image that he saw on Flickr. Here, he stumbled upon his first iPhone image, shot using the Hipstamatic

app. “I remember being taken aback not by the image quality but by its artistic quality. That was when I realised what a powerful tool an iPhone could be,” he says.

### Setting Base

Since then, David has grown exponentially—stylistically and as a photographer as well. But it took him time to find his foothold. His early Instagram work—a mix of colour and B&W, is a testament to this. It is also quite interesting to look at, considering that he now mainly shoots in B&W.

He then talks about the importance of good lighting in his work. “If there isn’t

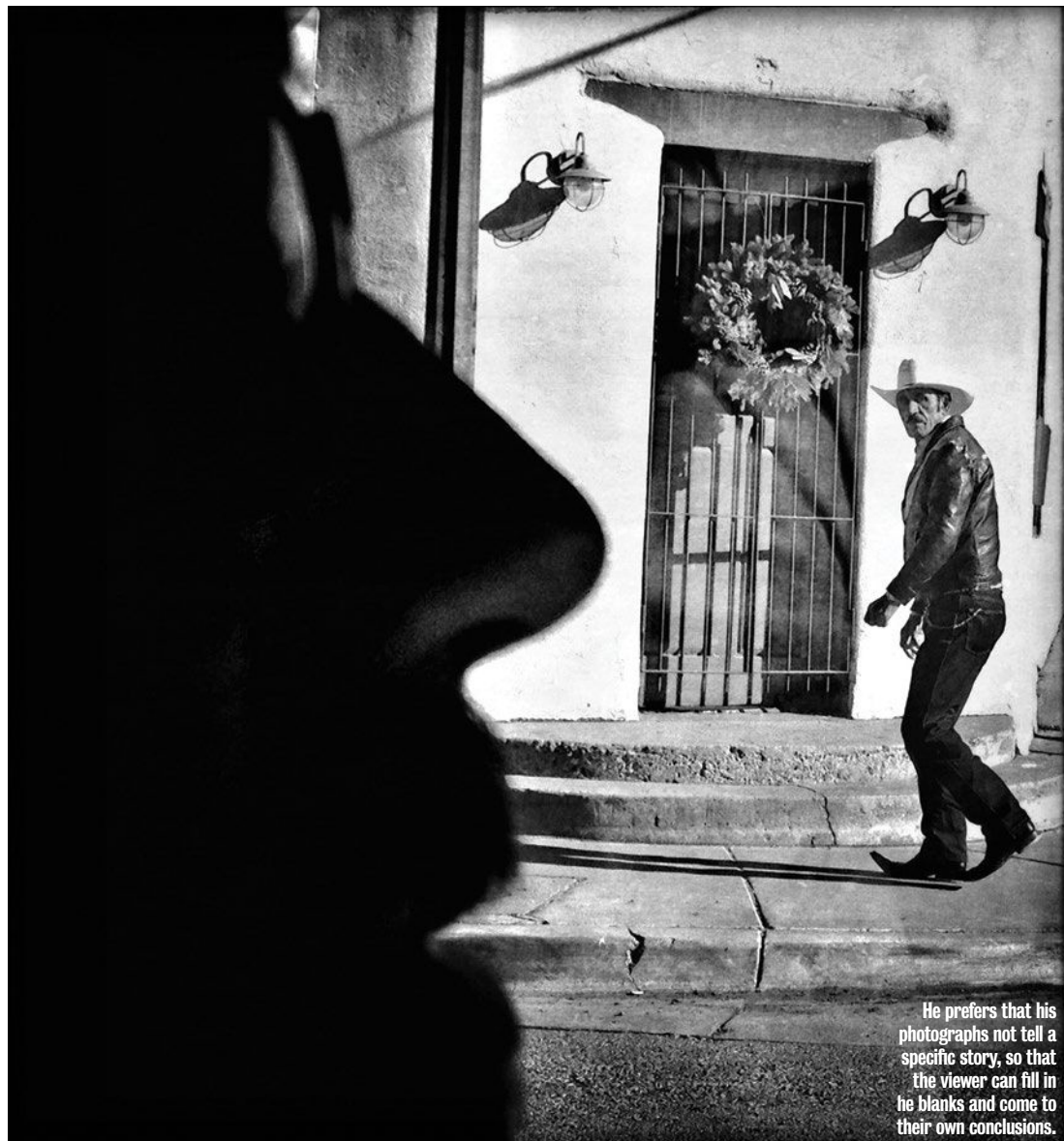
Snapseed is one of the foremost apps that he uses to edit his photographs. “It does almost everything I need, as far as basic editing goes—cropping, dodging, burning, vignetting, and so on.”



“I cannot possibly pick one favourite or memorable photograph from the ones that I shot. I have many that I like, but at the same time I tend to get sick of my photos very quickly, and tire of looking at them. I’m not the type of person who hangs his own work on his wall, I’d rather look at someone else’s.”

### INSTAFOLLOW NOW

There is never a dull moment on Terry Richardson’s Instagram feed. The famous fashion and portrait photographer regularly posts his trademark photographs with famous celebrities. Follow his fast-paced life at [@terryrichardsonstudio](#).



He prefers that his photographs not tell a specific story, so that the viewer can fill in the blanks and come to their own conclusions.

PROFILE

David deeply connected with Gary Winogrand's idea, that the process of making pictures was the closest thing to not existing. He felt like he knew exactly what it meant, that is, completely losing oneself in the ritual of looking, observing, seeking and capturing.

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### Tips on Becoming a Better Photographer

- **Less is More:** Don't let photography apps or accessories distract you from making pictures. Keep only a few at hand, and focus instead on the scene before you.
- **Studying the Greats:** Immerse yourself in great imagery by renowned photographers. This will help you develop and improve your visual literacy.
- **Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish:** In photography, you have to be eager to learn. Persistence is the key here, even if it means that you fail the first hundred times.

something compelling about the light, I feel very uninspired. It doesn't have to be dramatic, but it has to catch my eye in some way or another."

### That Old Timeless Feel

His photographs are also very reminiscent of old American gangster and film noir movies. But it isn't something that he consciously sets out to create. It is in fact a product of the influences that he has had in his career. "I love old B&W movies by Ingmar Berman and Federico Fellini, and photography masters like Eugene Smith and Harry Callahan. Their work has helped in shaping my style and aesthetic, even if it's in a subconscious way."

🔗 The extent of postprocessing is completely dependent on the image and how he wants to present it. If it is a strong, straight-out-of-the-camera shot, David slightly heightens the tones and textures. With his more creative editing, he sees if he wants to alter the mood or movement of the image.





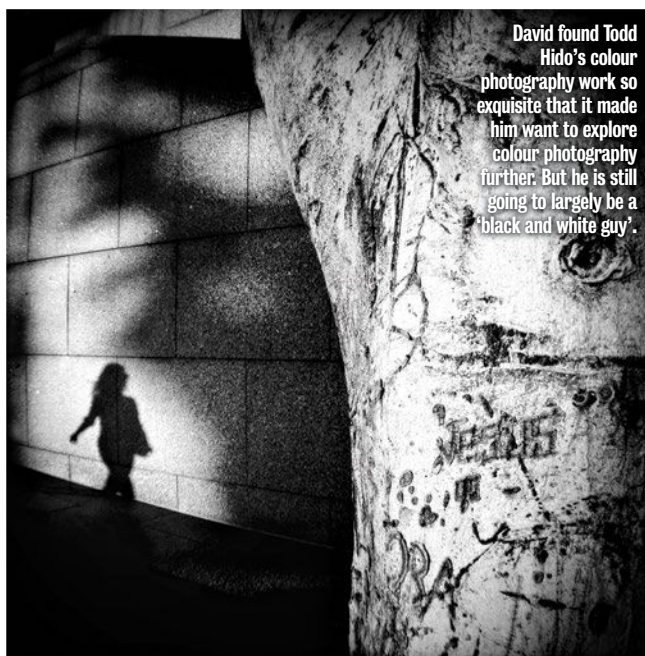
➤ In regards to street photography, he feels that the genre is so widely practiced that it may be repeating itself a bit. "At one point I asked myself—"Where can I take this? What can I do with this that hasn't been done?"

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### The Enigma of the Hat Man

Let's also not forget the elusive men in hats, a recurring figure in his work. It is very reminiscent of Richard Koci Hernandez's images of the same subject. In David's case, the hatted men take on different persona. Sometimes they look like intimidating American cowboys, and at other times like fedora clad undercover agents.

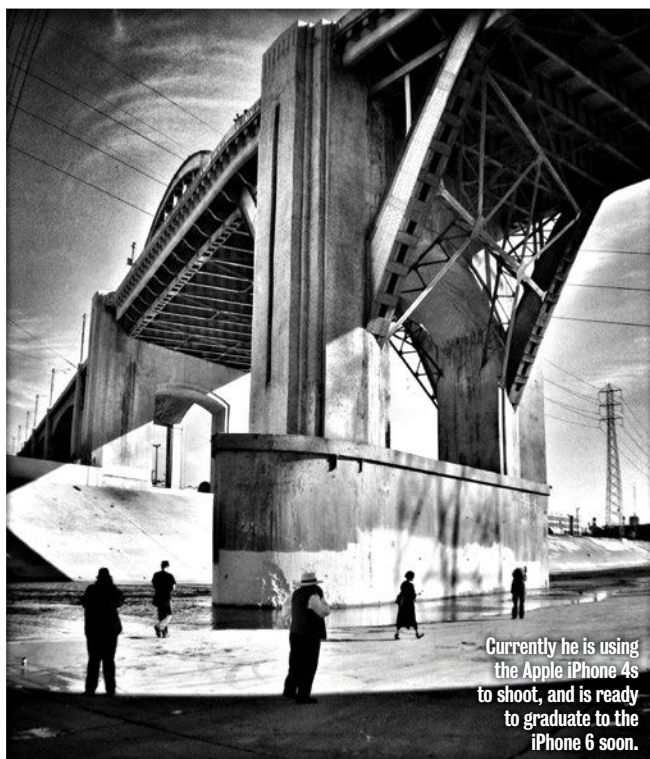
"When I think of cowboys I picture the more stereotypical milieu—like the ones riding horses in the desert. So for



David found Todd Hido's colour photography work so exquisite that it made him want to explore colour photography further. But he is still going to largely be a 'black and white guy'.

me, there's a certain visual incongruity to the sight of a cowboy walking down the downtown streets of a huge urban metropolis. There's an odd magnetism to it that draws me in. Koci tapped into this way early on. He pretty much owns the 'hat man'. I feel like any time I shoot someone in a fedora, I'm automatically copying him, and that's frustrating! Also, the 'hat man' seems to represent the every man in some general way that I can't quite put into words. This instills a certain timelessness into

➤ David is of the firm belief that you should treat your Instagram feed as your personal gallery space that is open to the world. Which is why, he is very selective about the photographs that he uploads.



Currently he is using the Apple iPhone 4s to shoot, and is ready to graduate to the iPhone 6 soon.






David is of the opinion that what you shoot with is only as important as the inspiration and ease it is providing you. Otherwise, all the bells and whistles can be a distraction.

Koci's work that I love. I'm not sure I always achieve it but it's something I aim for."

### Managing two Different Lives

Shuttling between his professional career as a musician and as a photographer when he is not touring with his band, David is slowly starting to find the back and forth a rather

exhausting balancing act. More so, since he has been receiving several new photography opportunities. But he isn't complaining. "I still enjoy playing the drums, and feel very fortunate to be able to pay the bills doing it. But when I'm off the road, it's all photography. Take off one hat and put on the other." 

# READERS' GALLERY

Better Cellphone Photography's readers were challenged to capture the myriad of moments that unfold on the street in this month's contest.

Presented by



**Winner**

**Say Cheese!**  
Shambhavi Ratnam,  
New Delhi

**What made me shoot this:** Everything came together perfectly in the making of this image. As soon as I whipped out my cellphone to photograph these children, they started mimicking my action with their own toy camera. The gentleman dressed as Charlie Chaplin in the background simply elevated the frame.

**What I learnt:** Moments don't require high-end gear to capture them. You should not miss a great scene because you feel you don't have the 'sufficient' gear.

**Shot with:** Nokia Lumia 620

## Honourable Mention

**Stretch it Out**  
Kamal Rana, New Delhi

**What made me shoot this:** At a local park in Pudukcherry, I observed health enthusiasts engaged in various forms of exercise.

What fascinated me was how this scene was layered with people doing the same thing in different postures.

**What I learnt:** Once you know a picture is forming, you should spend a lot of time at the place until you are able to capture it.

**Shot with:** HTC One S



## GRAND PRIZE

The grand prize winner, gets a 4200mAh Godrej GP PowerBank, the perfect companion for cellphone and travel photographers.



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\*Actual colour of the Powerbank may vary

To be featured on these pages, participate in our contests by logging on to [betterphotography.in/contests](http://betterphotography.in/contests) and win exciting prizes!



## Honourable Mention

**Pensive Moods**  
Pratiksha Suryawanshi,  
Mumbai

**What made me shoot this:** I have always liked the architecture of this particular building in Mumbai and the man sitting outside, perfectly complimented it. I also like the confidence of the man staring directly into my camera without being conscious.

**What I learnt:** Take your time composing the frame. It is just as important as timing.  
**Shot with:** LG Nexus 5

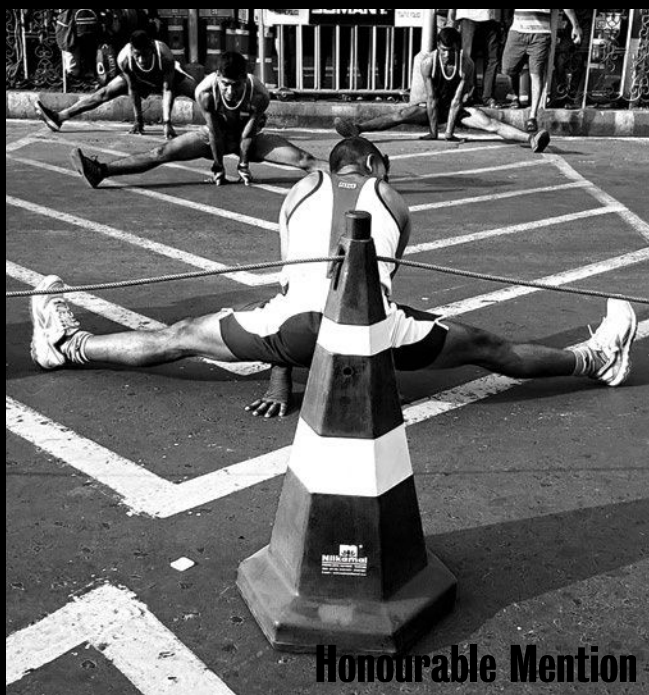
## In Splits

Sibasis Dhar, Kolkata

**What made me shoot this:** Early mornings at Park Street, Kolkata, are filled with different types of activities. When I saw these athletes training, I observed a pattern emerging. The divider pole perfectly added symmetry to the stretching athletes.

**What I learnt:** Don't take photography too seriously. You will need to clear your mind to find patterns and symmetry in a frame.

**Shot with:** Nokia Lumia 530 Dual SIM



## Honourable Mention

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## Nature in Greyscale

Supriya Joshi encourages you to deviate from viewing natural life in colour and shows you how to photograph the world around you in the various shades grey.

ON ASSIGNMENT

## These Walls of Mine

A unique way of finding inspiration at home

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ON ASSIGNMENT

## Into the Outdoors

Combining self portraits with nature

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TIPS & TRICKS

Learn to shoot weddings, HDR and architecture in black and white

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The variations in the textures and patterns across this arid desert landscape make it a perfect subject for B&W nature photography.

by Deepa Marathe



Sarang Naik

**W**ho is the first person that pops into your mind when you read the term 'black and white nature photography'? For me, it all goes back to the legend Ansel Adams, who pretty much introduced the world to a whole new way of seeing nature in monochrome. How can we take inspiration from his work today?

We see the world in colour, and for a subject that is bursting with it, shooting in black and white is more often than not, overlooked. Let's explore how you can photograph the natural world in B&W.

### Seeing With a Difference

Previsualising a scene in B&W while difficult, can also be immensely rewarding. Look at the different colours in the scene, and ask yourself which shade of grey will they translate to. A yellow flower might look light grey, while a deep blue sky could turn dark grey. Similarly lit reds and greens might end up translating to similar hues of grey, while contrasty lighting might make various shades of the same colour appear disparate.

### Going Black and White

Every camera today allows you to shoot in black and white, so simply switch to

⬆️ **Slow shutterspeeds and long exposures are great ways to reduce clutter in your frame, and further emphasise the form of your subject.**

**Ansel Adam's  
The Camera, The  
Print and The  
Negative offer  
great learnings  
on the subject.**

the mode and see what emerges on the screen before you. Even if you prefer to postprocess rather than shoot in B&W, this exercise will allow you to see how a particular scene will look when it is completely stripped of colour. You might also be able to observe patterns and subtle details, which you may have missed when viewing the frame in colour.

### It Begins at Home

Nature is not just the great outdoors... it's also the fruits and vegetables that are currently in your refrigerator. Take a look at legendary photographer Edward Weston's work, and how brilliantly he has photographed nature as still life, with subjects like lettuce leaves and bell peppers. The black and white medium emphasises form, making for stunning still life studies.

### Looking for Contrast

Nature often lends itself well to stark blacks and whites. Backlit leaves and flowers, shadows cast by a tangle of branches, shafts of light pouring through foliage can make for dramatic high contrast images.

➡ Would this scene look just as mindboggling in colour? The absence of colour is what makes the lizard virtually indistinguishable from the background.



Devendra Lingwal

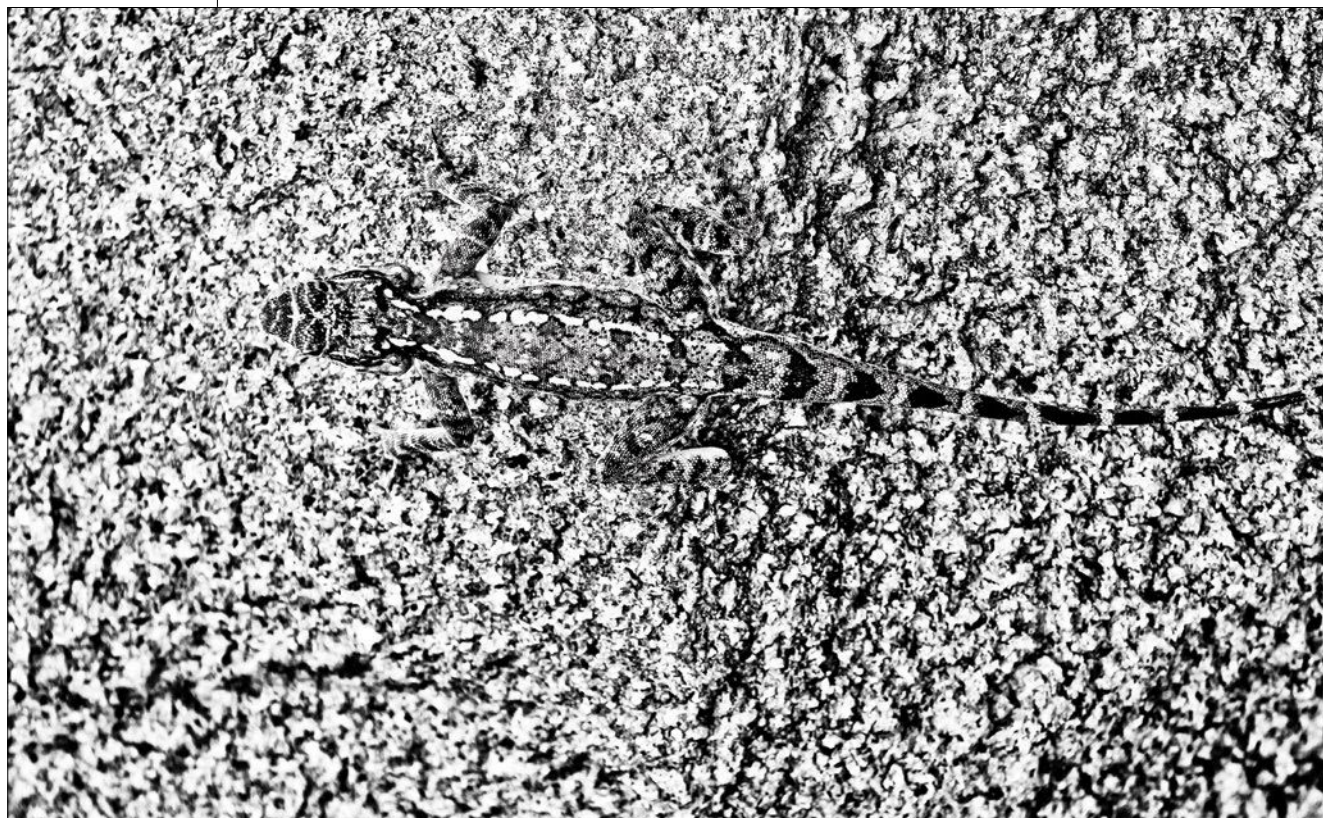
### Capturing Form

One easy way to draw attention to form is by rendering your subject into a silhouette—be it the sprawling branches of a tree against the sky, or a bird taking flight across a pond. Another option is to go close to your subject and isolate it from background clutter.

➡ Vignetting can harken the yesteryears. Silhouettes combined with vignettes can make your images look very Hitchcockian.

### A Multitude of Textures

The variations in contrast and tonality can greatly exaggerate the textures of natural elements like rivulets of sand, craggy rock formations, heaps of dried leaves and even the bark of trees. Even the fur of your pet or a close-up of the feathers of birds can provide you with striking textures.



Arun Sundar

Shooting nature in black and white is a great way to explore abstract photography. Without the presence of colour, it becomes difficult for the viewer to identify what he is looking at.

Phanindra Nath Sarkar



Kalisetti Sunil

➔ Black and white nature photography is not just limited to the day. A natural landscape can also look beautiful when bathed in moonlight.


### Long Exposure is Your Friend

The next time you are near a waterbody, like a spring, waterfall, river or even the beach, set your camera on a tripod and make a long exposure of the scene. Anything under 1/10sec will work. The smooth white sheet of water flowing over dark, jagged rocks, or the soft, white foam of the sea against dark, shifting sand, can look ethereal in B&W.

### Patterns in Black and White

Repeating natural patterns are excellent subjects for B&W photography. Rows of tiny leaves, tightly curled spirals of tendrils, the thin veins of rocks, the spots on butterflies, the grooves and curves of seashells, the sharp lines of pine cones or even the spikes of cacti can offer fascinating patterns.

You can also try combining two contrasting patterns for interesting results. If finding a pattern seems difficult, simply look for lines, curves and shapes in nature. Looking for symmetry in the natural world will always reward you with dramatic B&W images.

In the end, all that matters is your vision. Once you hone it, seeing nature in B&W becomes easy. 



The soft, undulating landscape of snow is broken by the sharp angular shape of the tree and the hut.

Samit Jain

# The Legends Speak

Ambarin Afsar takes you through what various practitioners of the visual arts have to say about the B&W medium and why it fascinates them.

"I work in colour sometimes, but I guess the images I most connect to, historically speaking, are in black and white. I see more in black and white... I like the abstraction of it."  
—Mary Ellen Mark

Eugène Atget

**"I used to hate doing colour. I hated transparency film. The way I did colour was by not wanting to know what kind of film was in my camera."  
- Helmut Newton**

**O**ver the years, various people related to the visual arts, be it filmmakers, actors, painters and of course, photographers, have had certain staunch ideas about the B&W medium. Some consider it a necessity, some consider it artistic, some consider it emphatic and powerful, while others consider it a relic of the past.

So, I set off, trying to understand the various reactions that the B&W medium evokes and what we can learn from them. As Maureen O'Hara, an Irish actress and singer, and one of the last living actresses from the Golden Age of Hollywood, said:

*"In the beginning, it was all black and white."*

### More? Or Less?

Does the medium strip away or does it give you more information? Kim Hunter, an American actress who starred in *A Streetcar Named Desire* was of the opinion that:

*"...emotions come through much stronger in black and white. Colour is distracting*



Roger Fenton

*in a way, it pleases the eye but it doesn't necessarily reach the heart."*

While Robert Frank, the creator of the seminal photobook, *The Americans*, believed:

*"Black and white are the colours of photography. To me they symbolise the alternatives of hope and despair to which mankind is forever subjected."*

➤ **"I like making B&W films in natural surroundings, but I much prefer shooting a colour film inside a studio where the colours are easier to control."  
- Claude Chabrol, French New Wave filmmaker.**

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Eugène Atget



"Maybe black and white is the best medium for landscapes, I don't know."  
—Fay Godwin, British photographer known for her B&W landscapes of the British coast.

Edward Curtis



Lewis Hine

“I prefer to work in black and white if it has to do with poetry or anything other than specific reality.”

—Leonard Nimoy, American actor, director and photographer, most famous for playing the character of Spock in the *Star Trek* franchise.

### Nostalgia and Why We're Drawn to B&W

The medium has a classic, timeless quality to it. Why does it evoke such nostalgia? Why do we hold on to the past?

Frank Lentricchia, an American critic, novelist and film teacher in *The Sadness of Antonioni*, a novel set in the vein of director Michelangelo Antonioni's films, wrote:

*“Our personal past is only available to us now through black-and-white film, it's a medium for communication with the dead, including our dead selves, the way we used to be, which is why we're drawn to it.”*

### On Slowing Down

Frank Miller, an American artist and the creator of *Sin City*, a graphic novel and also a film made almost entirely in B&W thinks:

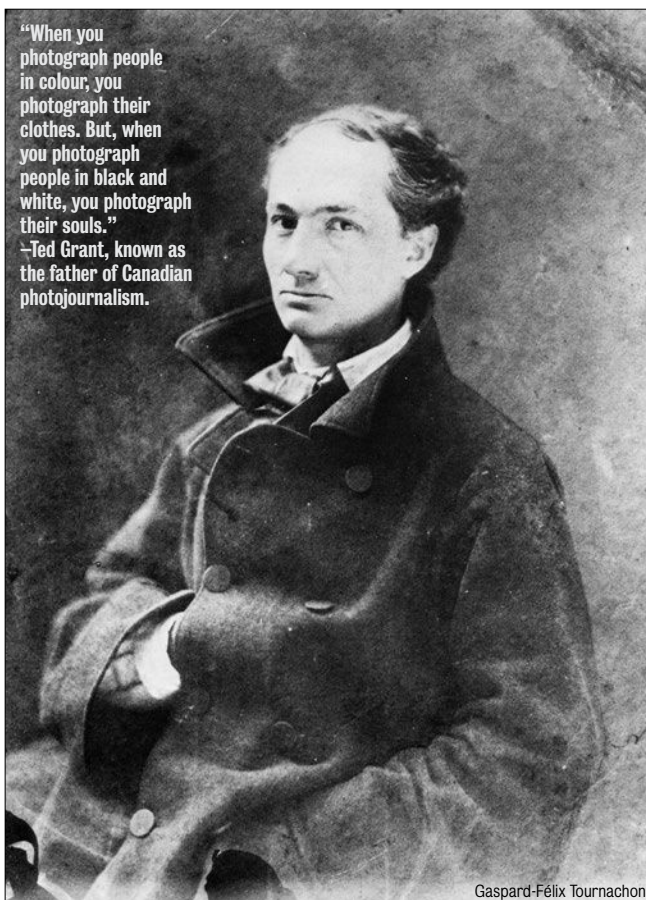
*“Working in black and white, I realised that the eye is less patient, and you have to make your point, and sometimes repeat it. Slowing things down is harder in black and white, because there isn't as much for the eye to enjoy.”*

### On Choosing Mediums

Paul Outerbridge, noted for his experiments with colour photography said:

*“One very important difference between colour and monochromatic photography*

*“When you photograph people in colour, you photograph their clothes. But, when you photograph people in black and white, you photograph their souls.”*  
—Ted Grant, known as the father of Canadian photojournalism.



Gaspard-Félix Tournachon

*is this: in black and white you suggest; in colour you state. Much can be implied by suggestion, but statement demands certainty... absolute certainty.”*

And as Sir Ridley Scott, the creator of films like *Blade Runner*, *American Gangster*, and *Thelma and Louise* said:

*“Life isn't black and white. It's a million grey areas, don't you find?”* **BP**

“I just have such a love of the tactile and sensuous quality of a black and white silver gelatin print.”  
—John Sexton, American fine art photographer



Roger Fenton

**“I like B&W films. I don't exactly know why—probably because there is a stylisation which is removed from actual life, unlike a colour film.”**  
—Norman McLaren, Oscar-winning director and animator.



ON ASSIGNMENT

🔧 I used two exposures for this image—one for the lamp and one for the ceiling which was much darker.

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# These Walls of Mine

Finding inspiration in the walls of his own house, Sarang Naik shoots a series of black and white abstract images of them.

**T**he idea for this project came into being when I had to cancel a photography outing one day, because it was raining heavily.

My usual reaction to this would have been to put away the camera. But since I hadn't picked up the camera for several days, I was itching to shoot something interesting.

This reminded me of a quote by photographer Robert Adams where he says, "No place is boring if you've had a

good night's sleep and have a pocketful of unexposed film." So I decided to challenge myself, and looked around my own house for inspiration. I was pleasantly surprised to find the abundance of things that I could shoot.

Black and white abstract photography has been a serious obsession of mine. It is a great tool for creative expression and a way to interact with my surroundings. The walls of my house proved to be a perfect subject for this aesthetic.

🔧 I made this image because the protruding wall and the sharp shadow it casts reminded me of a sundial.



## My Assignment

### Description

An abstract study of textures and the play of light on the walls of my home.

### Duration

The project is a culmination of several lazy afternoons spent at home, since April 2014. It is an ongoing series.

### Notes

"There is nothing to photograph here," is just another excuse. Look closer. There is always something to make pictures of.

**I wanted to approach a mundane subject like walls, with a fine art aesthetic.**

### My Equipment

For this series I used the Canon EOS 500D, along with the Canon EF-S 18–55mm f/3.5–5.6 IS II kit lens, and a Tamron SP 90mm f/2.8 Di VC USD 1:1 Macro lens. A tripod was indispensable, as I was shooting in low light and needed to fine tune the compositions.



### My Perspective

Photography-wise, a scene as a whole rarely appeals to me. I'm automatically drawn to finer details. It has become a sort of a meditative practice to observe and study the mundane details of a place and to make compelling photographs of them.

I looked at the walls of my home with the same mindset and found them immensely captivating—the tiny imperfections, the

textures formed by the dust and cleaning marks, the peeling and cracking paint, and the soft angled light accentuating it all. This gives the walls a certain personality.

This project is also my way of reconnecting with the space that I reside in. When I'm shooting outdoors I'm always aware and observant of everything around me. But when I come back home my awareness instinctively narrows down. ▶

Ⓢ I loved how the light makes this look like a prism. The bands of light were formed because of the curtains on the window.

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Ⓢ I like making unusual compositions by completely disregarding the rules. I also have a tendency of aligning the subjects centrally.





78 **⚡** This photograph was shot at night with a fluorescent tubelight as the light source. This caused the dark band in the middle of the image.

Therefore, the project has helped me look at my own home with fresh eyes.

### The Process

I zeroed in on the dirtiest parts of the walls and then looked for good compositions.

At other times I let the light dictate the composition. Soon, I realised that diffused light coming in at an angle, was the best way to bring out textures and create a nice gradient. I didn't move things around. I shot everything just the way I saw it.

**⚡** Here, I used a shallow depth of field to blur the edge of the table. It gave the impression of being shot using a tilt-shift lens.

### Tips For Shooting Abstracts In Your Home

- **Light Matters:** Pay attention to the play of light in the rooms at different times of the day. See how it accentuates or mutes the features of the room.
- **Look for Quirky Details:** Every house comes with its own set of idiosyncrasies. Learn to notice them and make them stand out in your images.
- **Think of a Good Concept:** Sticking to a single concept gives the project a structure instead of it being all over the place.

Sharpness and depth of field are critical here, especially when shooting corners. I mostly used apertures like f/11 and f/14.

The sensor dust that sometimes showed up due to the use of narrow apertures, added to the grungy look that I was going for.

In the digital darkroom I do a lot of selective contrast adjustments to bring out as much texture as possible. A sharpening filter and a slight sepia tone are added towards the end. **BP**

To view more images from Sarang's work, you can visit his website [www.sarangnaik.com](http://www.sarangnaik.com)

➡ The light reflecting off a car's roof formed this pattern in my bedroom. It created a gradient that looked perfect in black and white.

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➡ This is the design of the false ceiling in the living room. The layered curves make for a great minimalistic composition.



ON ASSIGNMENT

Ⓜ Sometimes I would photograph just my head. At other times, I would shoot just my body or make an image where I looked decapitated. It was a way of reconstructing myself in pieces.

# Into the Outdoors

Giacomo Brunelli delves deeper into his relationships with the camera, himself and his love for nature through a series of self-portraits.

For as long as I can remember, I have loved being outdoors. I grew up in the countryside near Tuscany, Italy where I was surrounded with greenery and animals. The project began one day when I was looking for an animal for my series of photographs titled *Animals*. When I looked down through the viewfinder, I found my shadow falling on the road, with a picturesque mountain in the background.

To me, it looked very beautiful, almost like a performance. I started to make funny poses to see what the shadows

would look like before settling on one that I photographed. I did not give this image much thought, but when I came back to the print later, I realised that it had the

## My Assignment

### Description

To photograph my shadows as I interacted with my environment and explored my presence in it.

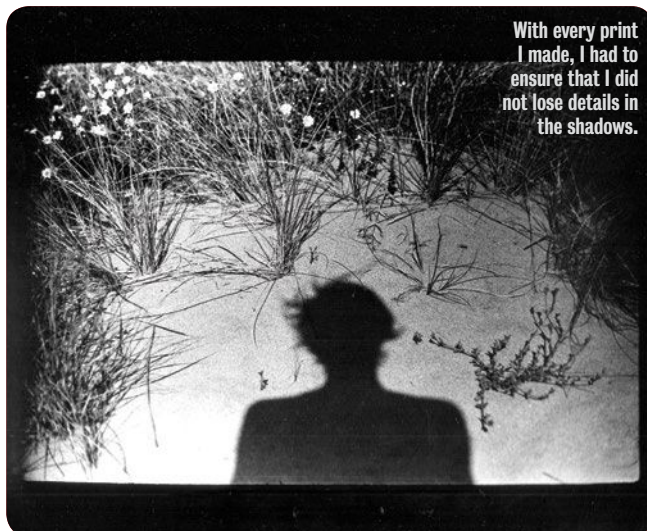
### Duration

Ongoing since 2010

### Notes

The landscape was a major part of each image. I would start with it and find a way to fit myself in.

**The shadows I projected needed to have their own personality.**



With every print I made, I had to ensure that I did not lose details in the shadows.



⌚ It was midday when I made this image. It looked like the tree trunk was a part of me, as the formations looked like internal organs.

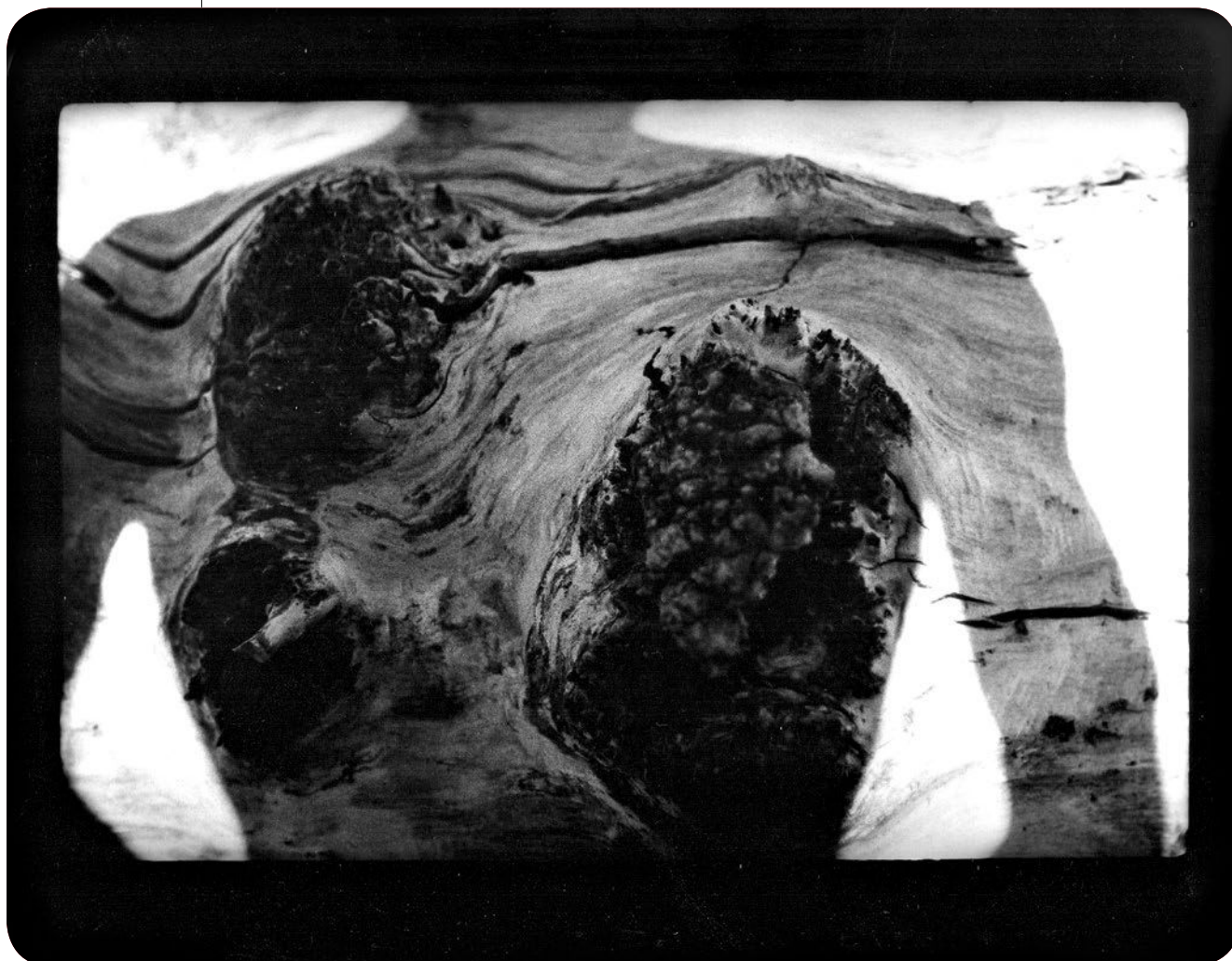
potential to be a wonderful series, much like Lee Friedlander's 1960s self-portraits.

### My Perspective

As I took the project forward, I wanted my shadows to be projected on natural surfaces and not in an urban

environment. Along with this, a natural landscape was crucial to the entire setting. I wanted to give depth to my shadows with things like soil, tree bark, rocks, plants and so on. In a way, I wanted to add a tactile dimension to the shadow. The shadow needed its own personality. ▶

⌚ I made this image close to the place I was born. The clumps of soil were piled together and ended up looking like rocks in the image.





🔦 I found a haystack to shoot my shadow on. Due to its curved shape, only half my shadow showed up, creating a split looking image in camera.

What I wanted to bring out with this, was the feeling that I was completely immersed in nature. Through the images, I could examine my position with respect to my surroundings. When I am in the countryside, I feel small and almost fragile against the immensity of nature.



### The Process

To get such a sharp shadow, I needed a lot of sunshine. So, most of these images were made in the summer months in Italy or UK. While I made some images when I was out shooting *Animals*, I realised the photographs were better when I set out to shoot just the self portraits.

I started the project in 2010 and as I went along, the photographs changed. I found that as I projected the shadows on different surfaces, I came up with ideas where I looked decapitated or half-eaten and so on. The camera that I used for the series had a viewfinder that allowed to me see my pose. I would experiment with different positions and surfaces until I got the best result.

With these images, the biggest challenge I faced was getting the shadow to stand out from the background. It is an exercise. I had to think of a very dark, almost black subject that had to pop out and look distinct. Another thing I had to consider was the surface. It couldn't be too black, too grey or too dark. I had to find a balance

🔦 I made this image with the idea of my metamorphosis into a porcupine or a hedgehog, because of the spikes of the plant.

### My Equipment

The camera I used was a Miranda Sensomat which had a viewfinder at the top. I used it with a 50mm lens and Kodak Tri-X 400 film. For the prints I used standard chemicals, paper and a very old enlarger.

### On Making Portraits with Yourself as the Subject

- **Find Your inspiration:** It could be a genre of photography, a certain place or anything. Immerse yourself in it and document your relationship with it.
- **The Binding Factor:** Several self portraits either have a consistent component while several do not. While you figure what works the best for you, it could be interesting to have a singular factor that binds all the photographs together.
- **Use Your Equipment Creatively:** Each piece of equipment has its own characteristics that could help you make unique portraits. Explore different ways you can hold, modify or lodge your equipment to get interesting results.

in shooting the images and processing them in the darkroom.

I printed the images in two sizes. The bigger ones are almost life size and are like a projection of me when I stand in front of them. The smaller ones, on the other hand, are more intimate.

As I went ahead with the project, I was able to see what I could do with myself by turning the camera within. My portraits

📌 The birch trees were almost shining in the background, which is what drew me to this setting in the first place.



reflected how I was a part of the landscape instead of just casting a shadow on them. 📷

📌 The form that my shadow took, looked the Etruscan vases that were made hundreds of centuries ago.

— As told to *Natasha Desai*

To view more images from Giacomo's work, you can visit his website [www.giacomobrunelli.com](http://www.giacomobrunelli.com)



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Remember that the viewer's attention is drawn to the subjects in the frame. Ensure that you keep the background as uncluttered as possible.

Riddhi Parekh

## TIMELESS WEDDINGS

### Invoking Nostalgia

Take a look at your grandparent's wedding photographs. What do you feel? This is the effect that black and white images have over their viewers. The medium adds a certain timeless quality to photographs, and evokes feelings of eternal love.

So unless you, as a photographer, can see and capture the romance in the scene, you may not be able to make memorable pictures.

### Experiment with Different Lighting

Some moments look good when they are soft, dreamy and in low contrast. This kind of a frame usually occurs when light levels are soft and even. This sort of lighting is excellent for high key photographs, where the whites are predominant.

High contrast lighting, usually found at weddings receptions, are more conducive to some dramatic, contrasty images, which have very little middle tones of grey.

Low key photography is possible in almost all kinds of lighting. However, it is for you, as the photographer, to decide exactly what sort of look you wish to

achieve in the final print, and then set the exposure on your camera accordingly.

### Create a Photo Story

It is highly unlikely for the bride and groom to ask you to shoot their wedding entirely in the black and white medium. But there is always a way out.

You have the option of presenting your clients with a separate set of B&W photographs in the form of a photo

⚠ Keep in mind that while colour pictures distract viewers from noticing any glaring photographic mistakes, B&W images are not so forgiving.



Filjoy Joseph



## TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATIVITY

Discover how science helps you in adding a creative touch to your photography through Sony's range of technologically advanced cameras.



essay. Not only will they have a series of timeless wedding pictures to remind them of their most important day, but it will also be a lovely addition to the wedding photography package.

### Masking Imperfections

If you notice that a few of your colour images contain a lot of noise, on account of using a high ISO, the good thing would be to convert the image to black and white. It wouldn't even look out of place as a grainy image can look much better in B&W.

### BLACK AND WHITE HDR

#### Your Camera Does Not Matter

When people think about High Dynamic Range images, they equate it with colour photographs that are eye-popping and vibrant. But, HDR is also a very effective tool for B&W photography as well.

The good thing about creating an HDR image is that it is not dependent on a particular device. Your DSLR, compact camera and even your cellphone's camera can shoot great HDRs, provided that you download an app that lets your bracket for exposure in the latter.

So don't worry if you think that your device is incapable of capturing a wide variety of tones. That is the whole point of shooting in HDR.

#### Capturing the Finer Details

Most of us don't really pay attention to the different shades of grey in black and white photographs. This is largely because most cameras are not equipped to capture the mid tone grey areas that often harbour tiny details and textures.

For instance, pay attention to how the sun lights up the different crevices and contours on a boulder. By shooting in HDR, all these tiny nooks and crannies will be highlighted.

#### Creating a Realistic Rendition

HDR does not always have to mean high definition or high contrast photographs. You can use it and still remain subtle.

One example is using HDR to prevent a few highlights from getting blown out in the image, or maybe to reveal an interesting subject that is hidden in



Raj Lalwani

shadows. However, be cautious about the extent of its usage, because you don't want your viewer to notice that the final image is an HDR rendition.

➔ Before you begin photographing an HDR image, make sure that your subject or the scene is contrasty.

### QUICK TIP

When shooting a panorama, avoid using a flash. This can lead to uneven illumination throughout the photograph.

#### Not Overdoing it

Ensure that you don't go overboard with the tones in your HDR photograph.

As it is, your picture will contain strong tones. You don't want to overdo it by increasing the saturation and contrast to the ►

## Use a Dedicated Software

You can create HDR photographs using Photoshop. However, a specially designed software like Photomatix will give you more tools and options to create a better-looking image.

## MONOCHROMATIC ARCHITECTURE

### Knowing What to Shoot

Historical monuments might look magnificent in colour, but it is not necessary for the grandeur to translate in the same manner when shot in black and white.

Most often, the colours that make these structures attractive, are not as vibrant in B&W. They mostly end up looking like the same shade of grey. Which is why, it is important to previsualise what the building will look like when it is stripped of all its colour.

### Drawing Out Shapes

Architecture is all about form. Therefore, it is easy to get lost in the different shapes and lines that make up the structure. For this reason, it is important to choose a feature that is simple in form, and has strong lines and shapes.

### QUICK TIP

When shooting at a slow shutter speed like 1/20sec, switch your camera to Burst mode so that you get at least one sharp image.

In addition to this, the colours may sometimes distract you from noticing certain aspects of the building. But by converting the image to B&W, you will notice how your eyes move around the frame, noticing the different lines and forms in the photograph.

### Using Light Dramatically

Shooting in B&W also gives you the opportunity to play with light in different theatrical ways, which may not always be possible when shooting in colour.

➔ When making B&W HDR images, you can control the intensity and gradation of tones, from black to white.

➔ Know when to use high and low contrast. While the former communicates boldness, the latter conveys grace.



Raj Lalwani



Arko Roy



Bert Kaufmann

➔ When shooting in B&W, you have the opportunity to play with your subjects and give them a new identity. This is possible because the viewer's eyes are only drawn to the different shapes and lines in the frame.

Once you have located your light source, look around and see what kind of shapes and patterns it creates on the ground or the neighbouring walls. For instance, see what kind of effect is created when light streams through latticework.

Also, remember that you will be able to capture high contrast images only when the sun is directly hitting the structure.

### Tackling Bad Weather

A good architecture colour shot is defined by its vibrant sky, as much as it is by its grandeur. But what if the weather is bad?

The good thing about shooting black and white pictures is that you don't have to worry about dull or gloomy skies. All you have to do is use a red filter, which helps in increasing contrast in the image. 📷



### READER'S TIP

#### Making Evocative Environmental Portraits

I shot this photograph in a small village called Mekhliganj in Cooch Behar, West Bengal. Since I teach at the village's school, I frequent the area quite often. One time when I was walking around, on the lookout for something interesting to shoot, I noticed one of my young students. She was standing alongside a bundle of jute, and seemed quite lost in her thoughts.

The mellow and dreamy expression on her face is what interested me in making this photograph. I felt that the whole scene perfectly encapsulated the dreams and aspirations of rural India.

Before framing the image, I decided that instead of shooting a traditional portrait, I would make an environmental portrait. This would also bring more meaning and context to the subject. Several bundles of jute formed an even backdrop, which I quite liked. This helped in a way that it did not overpower the main subject. I also used a shallow depth of field to bring all the focus on the young girl.

—Sujan Sarkar



Sujan Sarkar

In B&W portraits, it is very important to identify the subject, compose accordingly, and then capture the mood.

## BRIEFLY

### Is a memory card good to store data files?

Apart from saving digital images on the card, you can use it to store other files without worrying about errors.

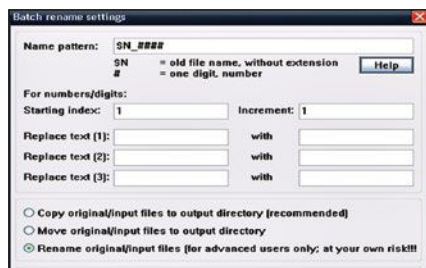
## What is in a Name?

Recently, I was giving certain images to a few friends of mine. In order to ensure that the images did not get mixed up and to ensure due credit, I wanted to rename the images. However, these were 100 odd images and manually renaming them got tedious. I also wished to retain the original file names. Can you tell how I could do this?

**Dharmesh Adhikary, Goa, via email**

If you simply wish to rename your images, then you can select them all in the Explorer window, right click and then choose Rename from the dropdown menu. The name that you type in will be given to all the images in the folder.

Alternatively, if you wish to keep the original filenames intact then you can use software like Irfanview. Go to File > Batch Conversion/Rename. Once the Batch Conversion window opens, navigate to your desired folder and click on Add All. Under the Output Directory option, select a location to save the images. Then, under the Work



➔ This is the Set Rename Option window which can be opened by going to Batch Rename settings in Irfanview.

As section, choose Batch Rename. Click on Set Rename Options under Batch Rename settings and choose a renaming format such as \$N\_#### where "\$N" will retain the old file name while "\_" acts as a separator and "####" is for a four-digit number. So, the resulting filename would be "Card\_0001".

## Balancing Flash Output

It happens often that while using flash the subject gets blown out and the background becomes dark. How do I ensure that the flash does not overpower the ambient lighting?

**Nikita Bose, Kolkata, via email**

The use of flash in the default automatic mode of the camera tends to give a harsh burst of light that kills any ambient light that may be there. The subject often gets blown out, and the white light overpowers any coloured or mixed lighting that may be there in the scene. To overcome this problem, you can try a few options. Use a Flash Exposure Compensation of -1EV. You can also diffuse the flash by covering it with tissue or butter paper. Also, ensure that your subject is not standing too close to the camera.

For capturing ambient light, it is best to set the flash's mode to Slow Sync. In this mode, the camera chooses a relatively slow shutter speed, while firing the flash. The slow shutter speed ensures that ambient light enters the lens, while

## HOW TO

### Get the Perfect Audio in Your Videos

Most of us use our compact cameras and DSLRs to do more than photography. Often, we shoot the occasional home video or document an important event. Some of us might even want to shoot a short film or make a video project. However, ensuring good quality sound in these video clips can be slightly challenging. We give you a few tips on how to make your videos sound better.

#### Scout for a Good Location

Regardless of whether you are at an outdoor location or shooting indoors, look around a little and you will find an area which is relatively quiet. Avoid standing near generators, speakers or large fans.

#### Do Not Touch the Mic

Figure out where the onboard mic is located and try to keep your hands away from it. Unwanted noise can be caused by fingers accidentally brushing the mic.

#### Get Close

The closer you are to your subject, the better they will sound. Most microphones are prone to

something called AGC or Automatic Gain Control. It automatically adjusts the sound recording level so that the mic will pick up something, no matter how faint it is. The further away you are from your sound source, the more AGC will magnify the sound you are trying to record. This means that unwanted background noise will also be magnified.

#### Record Ambient Sounds

Each place has its own 'buzz'. This may be sounds of waves crashing on the shore, noisy crowds or even birds chirping. Record a minute or two of footage with just the ambient sound. If you intend to edit your videos later, you can simply add this background sound track to cover the gaps in your audio recording—when a person stops talking or takes a long pause or when a performance ends.

#### Switch to Manual Focus

Often, autofocus motors and zooming actions make a lot of unwanted whirs and clicks that are recorded as well. Use manual focus to ensure that the frame is well-focused and then start recording the clip. Alternatively,

you can look for lenses that are stabilised for quieter video, for instance, Canon has a range of STM lenses designed to eliminate mechanical noise during video.

#### Plug in an External Mic

If your camera has a line-in for an external microphone, then make use of the option and use an external mic. Alternatively, you can look for microphones that fit on to the hot shoe and check if they are compatible with your camera.



## Breaking the Rules

Recently, a senior photographer told me that my photographs do not work well because they do not follow the rules. How important is to apply compositional rules like the Rule of Thirds? Is it not alright if I break conventions, sometimes?

**Ruhi Rajput, Rajkot**

It may be true that your picture could have been improved by adhering to the Rule of Thirds, but it is not necessary. Photography is both an art and a science. The science of photography includes the understanding of basic principles and technical aspects. The art side, on the other hand, comes into play when the photographer is trying to create something from his vision or shoot something from an innovative perspective.

Just like with every other art form, a number of people have studied the subject to understand what kind of photographs tend to work better, and thus established a

number of guidelines. Depending on the manner in which the human eye tends to interpret visuals, you have visual aids like the Rule of Thirds that help people make better compositions.

But then, though it is called the 'Rule of Thirds', we would specifically wish to say that it is not a rule—only a guideline. There are situations in which it would make sense to not follow these guidelines at all.

For instance, conventional wisdom states that pictures that have the subject in the centre tend to be weak and boring. However, for a picture where you are trying to establish a person with respect to his surroundings, a centralised placement may actually work wonders! The same logic applies to other compositional rules too.

In addition to guidelines, great photography is also about ideation and seeing the world in a new, personal way. Our recommendation would be to study the guidelines, practise them, but then also understand which situations need you to break them.

Question  
of the  
Month

### BRIEFLY

#### What is a blimp?

Compatible with semi-pro and pro DSLRs, it is a sound-insulated shell that reduces the noise produced by the mirror slap of the camera.

the burst of flash helps freeze the main subject. If you have a compact camera that does not allow you much control over flash modes, you can use the Night Portrait scene mode as it produces a similar effect.

## From Studio to Outdoors

I usually shoot in a studio environment under controlled lighting, and am not used to shooting in outdoor situations. Next month, I plan to trek across two states and will face a lot of situations that I am otherwise not very comfortable with. What are the things I should keep in mind?  
**Shravan Singh, New Delhi**

Since you already have some experience with studio lighting, it should also help you in the great outdoors. Imagine the sun as a giant light source that you cannot move. However, what you can do, is plan your day so according to the position of the sun. If you wish to shoot architecture and monuments, do a recce of the location and find out the time during which the structure is best illuminated. If you're planning on making portraits, then avoid shooting at high noon. If you absolutely must, then either use the on-board flash to fill in light on your subject's face, or shift them to an area with some shade. Early mornings and evenings will give you soft golden light and long shadows that can create a wonderful mood. If it is an overcast day, think of clouds as giant diffusers in the sky.

These times are best for making portraits as everything is evenly illuminated. There is a world of opportunities out there, just remember that what you learnt in the studio can very easily be applied to the real world as well.

## Photographing Jewellery

I am a jewellery shop owner from Madurai and I use a compact camera to shoot pictures of the jewellery displayed in the store. I use these images in the store's brochure and on the web. How can I avoid shadows and reflections from spoiling the images?

**Mohan Shetty, Madurai**

Since the jewellery is accessible to you, the best possible solution would be to take it out of the glass case. This will ensure that you do not have any unwanted reflections in the picture. To further diffuse the light, place the jewellery in a light tent. Alternatively, you could use a softbox or even simple thermocol reflectors to act as diffusers. Another solution would be to try changing the light source to flicker-free fluorescent bulbs.



Bharat Talreja

➡ Continuous light sources don't overheat and are colour balanced for daylight, making them ideal for jewellery shoots.



## Jayanta Roy

- He is a self-taught photographer whose job as a salesman requires him to travel extensively around the country.
- Recently, he was selected as one of the four winners of the Tamron Challenge 2015.
- He watches movies in his spare time. *Forrest Gump*, *Shawshank Redemption* and *Gangs of Wasseyapur* are some of his favourites.

# A Melodious Journey in Monochrome

Jayanta Roy has always been in constant awe of India's magnificent landscapes. Natasha Desai discovers what lies ahead for the photographer.

**M**ore often than not, you will find Jayanta Roy listening to music through his headphones as he stands completely immersed in the stunning landscape in front of him. The first time I viewed his photographs, I felt a sense of serenity and detachment all at once. Not surprisingly, his favourite song by Rabindranath Tagore has overtones of a solitary journey. *Jodi tor dak shune keu na*

*ashe tobe ekla cholo re, ekla ekla cholo, ekla cholo, ekla cholo, ekla cholo re...* (If they answer not to your call, walk alone).

This is how the 33-year-old Jayanta prefers to shoot images—alone, away from the madness and with all his energies transfixed on the photo alone.

## Childhood Paradise

Roy grew up in the lap of greenery, in the town of Sodepur, 20km outside

**“We need to love and care for nature. It is the ultimate boss! No matter what we have, we will never be able to overcome its eventual loss.”**

📌 Jayanta made a series of images during the build-up of Cyclone Hud Hud on a beach in Gopalpur, Orissa in October, 2014. The entire area had been placed under high-alert as it was dangerous to be so close to the water. This image forms a part of the series which was made in a span of four to five hours, after which, the police asked him to evacuate the area.



GREAT MASTERS

## Roger Ballen

A journey into an absurd  
and comical world

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PHOTOFEATURE

Soumya Shankar Bose  
chronicles the lives  
of *Jatra* artists

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YOUR PICTURES

A showcase of the  
best images sent by  
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Many valleys in Kashmir  
get cut off from the rest of  
the country in the winters.  
But, he finds himself going  
there as soon as they open  
as he enjoys photographing  
the pristine conditions left  
in the wake of winter.

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⊕ Humans rarely make an appearance in his photographs. When they do, they are usually dwarfed by their surroundings, as he believes we are mere spectators to creation.

of Kolkata. “My surroundings were breathtakingly beautiful. I would often wish I had a camera so that I could preserve its exquisiteness through my photos. I was, however, naively unaware of the expenses that came with photography.” His father was eventually able to give him a secondhand Vivitar camera, which still forms a part of his gear today.

### Learning Small Lessons

The first time Jayanta actually started making images was in Darjeeling, when he was 18 years old. His uncle owned a Kodak camera and he loaned it to Jayanta for the duration of his stay.

That first roll of film, however, proved to be a disaster for him. For some reason, none of the images could be developed. “The roll contained a

# TIPS BY JAYANTA

- Never step out to shoot without extra batteries and storage. Also, never underestimate the value of taking more than one back up. Technology is a fickle friend. It is convenient, but highly unreliable.
- Photography is an art that requires you to immerse yourself in it. Enjoy it and shoot carefully. Running after success will only stunt your learning.

🔴 He has watched *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) several times in an effort to study its landscapes. “The movie was shot beautifully and there is much learning to be found in it, photographically.”



lot of important memories, and to this day I feel its loss. But, it was a learning experience for me. Since then, after a shoot, the first thing I do is take several backups of my images. I cannot rest until I complete this task.”

## An Unwavering Love for the Natural World

Along the way, Jayanta started learning by looking at Sebastião Salgado’s epic work, *Genesis*. “His images had a lasting impact on me. To devote your time and life to the betterment of the environment is

🔴 Jayanta’s travels around India are not spontaneous decisions. He plans and begins saving up for his trips months in advance. Apart from this, he constantly monitors the weather of the particular place so that the conditions are ideal when he visits.

🔴 For Jayanta, black and white photography is almost divine. He feels that the medium allows us to cross over to the other side of reality where everything is defined in shades and not colours.



📌 Before embarking on any trip, he previsualises his series. This helps him stay on track throughout the limited time that he has at a particular place.

special. His photographs come from deep within himself and his way of life is very inspiring to me," says Jayanta.

It is the commitment to nature that defines his imagemaking today. "In India, we have a lot of human interest photography, and rightfully so. However, I also believe that our country's nature should be brought into the limelight. This is because no matter how technologically advanced and progressive humanity becomes, the environment is what will prevail."

### The Next Pit Stop

Jayanta believes that one can never stop learning. "No matter how you learn, you should put in more hours practising on your own. I keep photographing the same subject over time, until I am completely satisfied with what I have created. This is a feeling that no classroom will be able to give you."

While he shoots with an entry-level DSLR, his next step is to master the medium format film camera. "I am experimenting with film since it has always been my dream to develop it on my own.

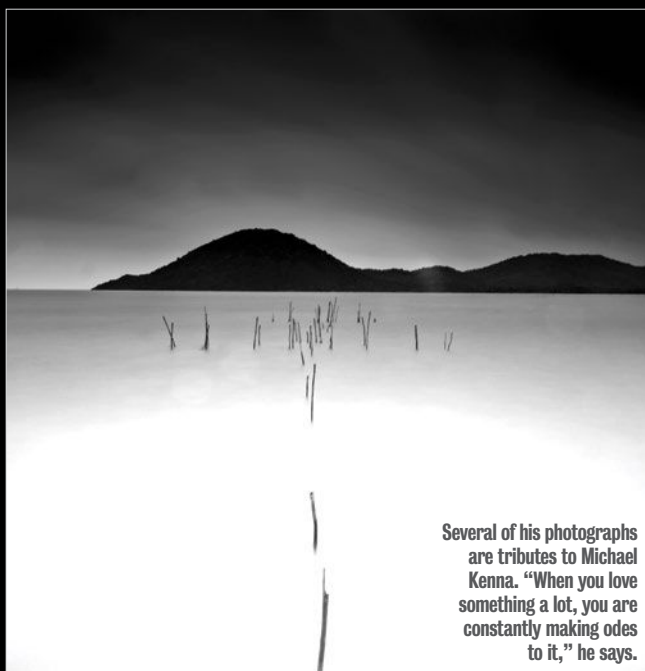
### GADGETS & GEAR

- Jayanta uses a Nikon D3100 with the Tamron SP 28-75mm f/2.8 XR Di, Tokina AT-X 116 PRO DX 11-16mm f/2.8 and Nikkor AF-S 50mm f/1.8G lenses.
- He believes that the camera is just a tool and individual skill is what matters more.

It is a kind of magic that is undeniable.” Despite his experience in the field, Jayanta still considers himself as an amateur. He is in no rush and is gradually developing his own style. “I have been actively photographing for over four years now and I believe that one’s journey in photography should be slow. I have miles to go before I will truly be pleased with my work,” he says.

With his head held high, and his mind without fear of the path ahead, Jayanta’s tenacity and doggedness seem to personify yet another Tagore poem—*Where the Mind is Without Fear*. 📷

You can view more of Jayanta Roy’s work at [www.behance.net/jayantaroy](http://www.behance.net/jayantaroy)



Several of his photographs are tributes to Michael Kenna. “When you love something a lot, you are constantly making odes to it,” he says.

“There is already so much chaos around us in life. I find that colours distract us from the deeper meaning behind photographs.”



🎧 Music plays a big influence on his imagery. There is hardly a shoot during which he is not listening to his favourite songs which range from Rabindra Sangeet to Bob Dylan.

## My Best Shot



# NEERAJ PAUL

### Why it is my best shot

This is one of my best shots because of how perfectly I was able to capture the curve of the tunnel, as it winds its way under the surface of New Delhi's roads. The presence of the man in the frame adds a subdued mood to the composition.

### Where and when I shot this image

This image was made on the site of the underground tunnel construction of the New Delhi Metro in 2009.

### How I achieved it

I was inside the tunnel, trying out different compositions and lenses that would best depict the curve of the tunnel.

As I was changing my lens, I saw this construction worker approach from the other end. He seemed to be tired and when he stopped to take a break, I made this image of him.

### The gear I used to get the shot

I used a Nikon D200 camera with a Nikkor AF 80–200mm f/2.8 ED lens.

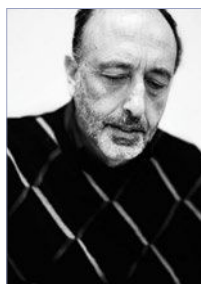
*Neeraj Paul has been the Photo Editor of The Times of India, New Delhi since the year 2000. He has been a photojournalist for over 25 years, and has been featured in several leading publications over the course of his career. While he primarily enjoys shooting human interest stories, he also indulges in landscape photography when not on assignment.*







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(1950)

# Roger Ballen

Journeying through Roger Ballen's photographic world leaves Aditya Nair in a dream state. Warning: You are about to step into the world of absurdism. Leave your sanity behind.

Ⓢ Wires became a fascination for Ballen. In paintings the use of lines serve as a way to connect different parts of the image. Roger believes that the use of wires in photographic composition has to serve a great metaphorical purpose for the audience.

Three years ago, I was thrown headfirst into the world of Roger Ballen's photography. My introduction to his work was a music video called *I Fink You Freeky*, by a South African rap trio, *Die Antwoord*. Visceral, haunting, surreal... even if the three images on this page constitute all you have seen of Roger's work, you already know that these words don't do them any justice.

Roger Ballen's photographs have an incredible ability to look set up and utterly spontaneous at the same time. They demand your attention from the first glance and are relentless in their weirdness.

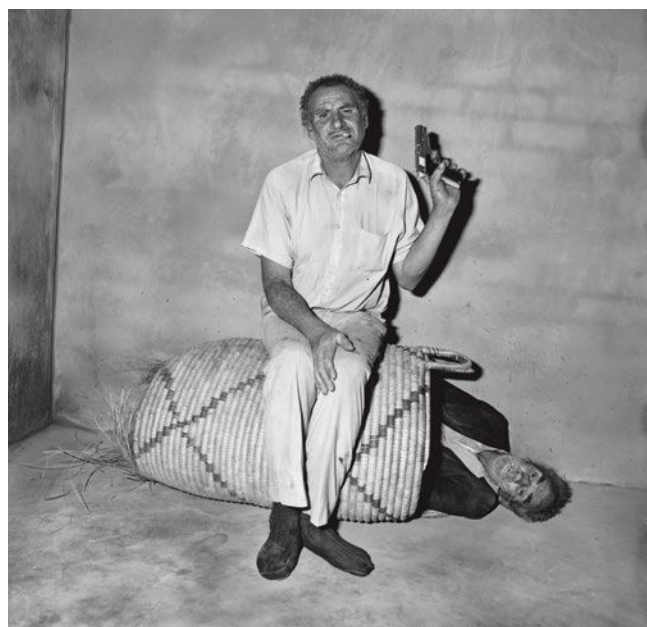
### Let Your Mind Wander

The longer you spend looking at these photographs the more interesting every tiny detail becomes... the more interpretations your mind creates. For Roger, "The best photographs don't comprise one or two or three or four or five elements. They integrate thousands of elements at one time. My goal

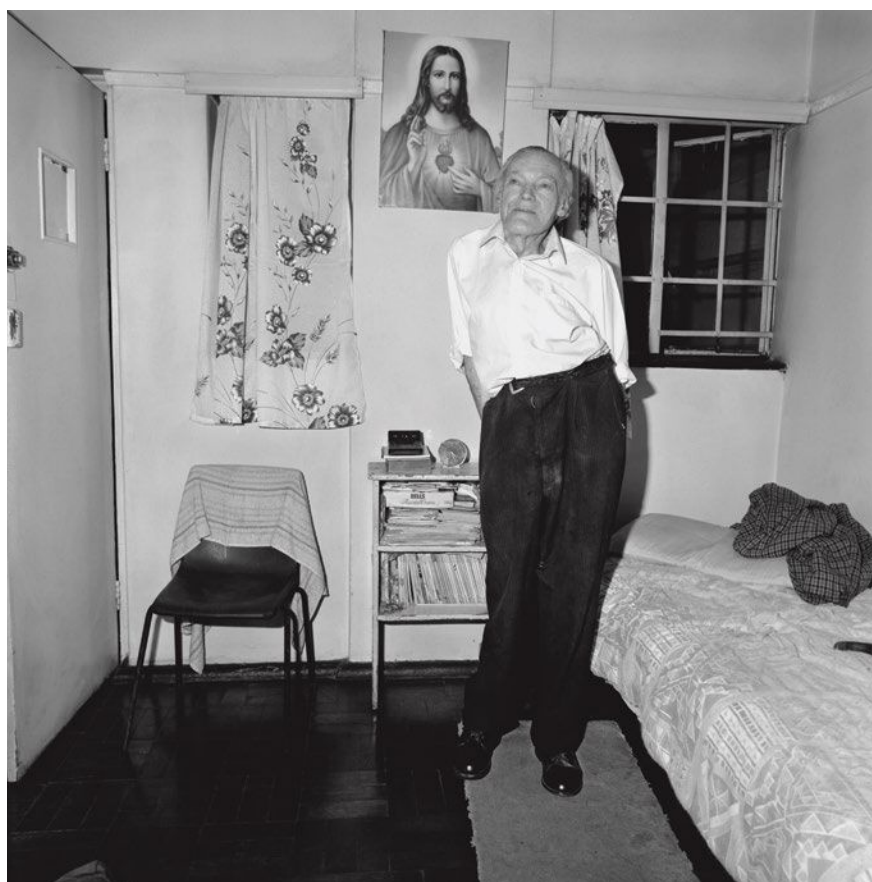
ultimately is to create a very strong intense formal image."

Listening to Roger talk about his images was an oddly fun experience. When he spoke of the series, he was no longer a photographer talking about his creation. Instead, he often sounded like a professor well-versed in Ballen-esque photography. "If I had to describe my images I would say ▶

Ⓢ The comedic beauty in Ballen's images arise out of his placement of social outsiders at their most absurd.



All photographs by Roger Ballen. Image Courtesy: Outland, Phaidon Press Inc



Ⓢ His images are able to combine the oddity of the human body with surrounding objects to give the impression of great dysfunction.



### Outland

The book is a powerful portrayal of whites on the fringes of South African society. It is the culmination of over 20 years of work for geologist turned artist-photographer Roger Ballen. The soon to be launched second edition of the book will have 45 new images, that were previously unseen.



➤ The various items that people collect and hang on their walls can tell you a lot about the subject's personal life. At the same time, Roger is not interested in what would be considered "kitschy".

that they are formally simple and complex in their meaning."

### The Beginning of the Aesthetic

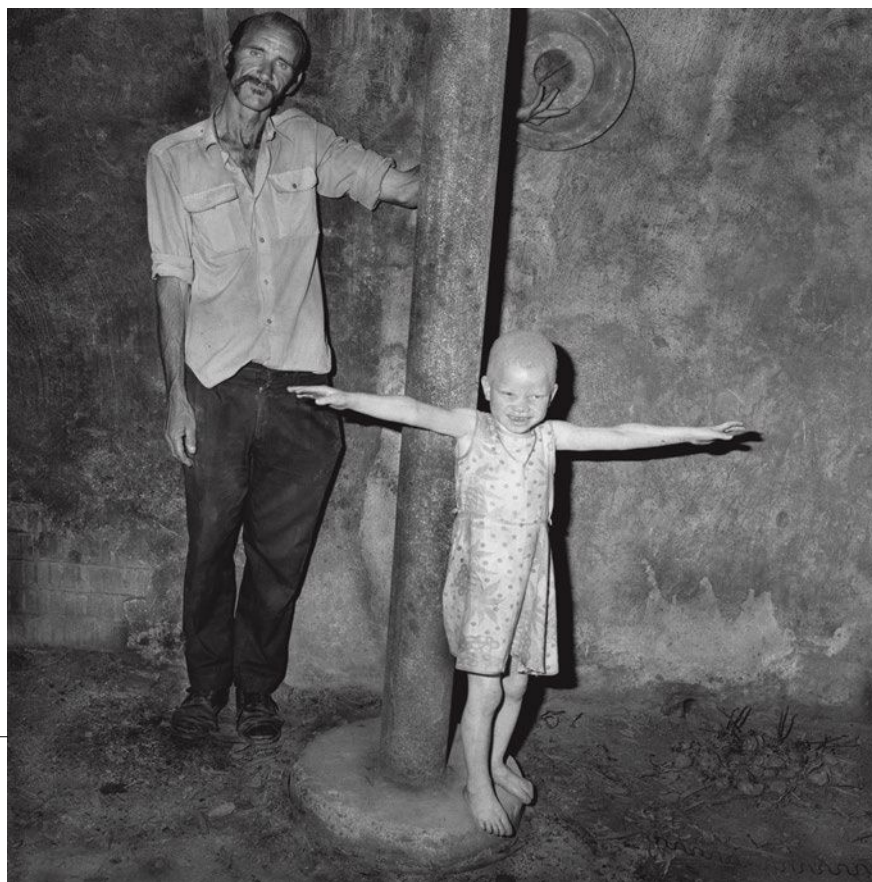
Roger probably has one of the best and envious introductions to photography that I have heard. In the 1960s, his mother joined Magnum as a photo editor. "She frequently worked with photographers like Henri



Cartier-Bresson, Elliot Erwitt and André Kertész. They sent her books, prints and would drop by home quite often," he says in a straightforward tone. "I was inundated by beautiful images from a very young age." As a result Roger developed a strong formal photographic technique, which when combined with his penchant for the absurd, has come to define his visual style.

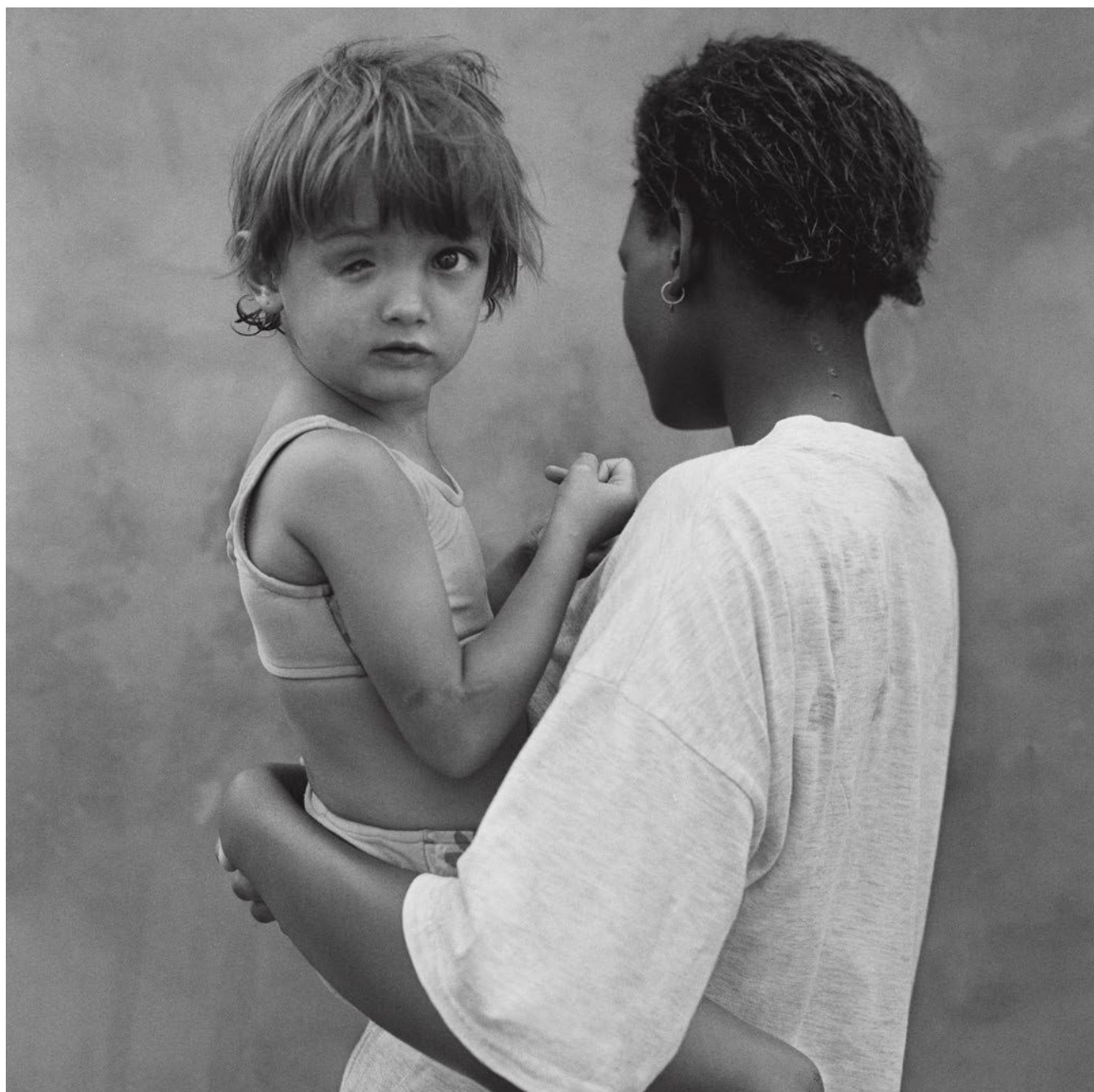
➤ According to Roger, the best pictures are the ones you don't have words for, the ones that leave you in a state of contemplative silence.

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➤ Roger Ballen often uses a harsh direct flash to intensify the dread and disturbance an image may cause the viewer.

**"André Kertész was an artist first and a photographer second. He made me realize that photography could do more than document."**  
—Roger Ballen



Despite falling in love with the medium early on, Ballen “emerged” as a photographer only after he was fifty years old. He credits his strong, recognisable aesthetic style to this late emergence. “I had been doing photography for 30 years before I began making money from it. Since I was in Johannesburg, away from the photographic community, I didn’t know what the latest trends were or what galleries were looking for. This distance has helped me photograph whatever I wanted, the way I wanted.”

### From Photographer to Artist

*Outland* is perhaps Roger’s seminal work. The motifs, use of wires, cracks on the wall...

even people’s odd relationship with their pets that are seen in *Outland* can be seen in his earlier works. “The initial images in *Outland*, they have a documentary style to them that is similar to my previous series *Platteland*. However, around 1997, I started thinking of myself as more than just a photographer... as an artist-photographer.”

From 1986–2000, the period during which *Platteland* and *Outland* were photographed, South African society was in turmoil and uncertainty. In 1984, the National Party, which was the ruling white government, passed the Apartheid legislations. It gave white people more privileges while curtailing the rights of the

➤ “His images literally and figuratively discuss the condition of having one’s back against the wall as an attempt to emphasise the marginalisation of his subjects.”  
—From *Outland*



🔴 When photographing his subjects, Roger does not preconceptualise final image. He says, “How do plan for all the thousands of elements that go into making a great photograph? I just show up and do my best to create something of meaning.”

black inhabitants. Under Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress came to power in 1994, abolishing this legislation.

This led to insecurity amongst the white community. The people who Roger photographed at that time, lived on the fringes of South African society and were unsure of their ability to survive without the privileges of Apartheid.

“It was a transitional period, while society tried to come to a status quo. You can see that in many of the subjects. They weren’t confident in their demeanour.”

However, in his books, Ballen writes that he is not concerned with documenting the

decline of colonist ideas of supremacy or even depicting the plight of the marginalised white minority. For him, his subjects are protagonists in a theatrical drama.

### A Psychological Take

Despite his work being deeply rooted in the political history of South Africa, Roger says he isn’t a socio-political photographer. “I was always trying to deal with more psychological and human issues through my images.” He has a degree in psychology and often refers to Karl Jung when discussing certain aspects of his images. However, he did face a lot of

**“The pictures that leave you feeling there’s something mysterious about what’s out there, are the ones that have done their job.”  
—Roger Ballen**



➔ Roger Ballen's photos are psychological statements rather than being political, social, or economic ones.

political backlash, even a few death threats. “The white population I was photographing didn’t like to be seen in this frivolous way. They wanted to be seen as people who could shape of their own reality. However, it was their reality that shapes them.”

He continues, “With *Outland*, I started to develop an aesthetic that revealed to me important aspects and absurdities of the human condition and the way people deal with their realities.”

I am reminded of the William Faulkner’s quote, “The only thing worth writing about is the human heart in conflict with itself.” This appears to be Roger’s photographic philosophy as well. He puts it slightly differently, “I am tasked with bringing the interior to the exterior.”

### **The Light Comes from the Darkness**

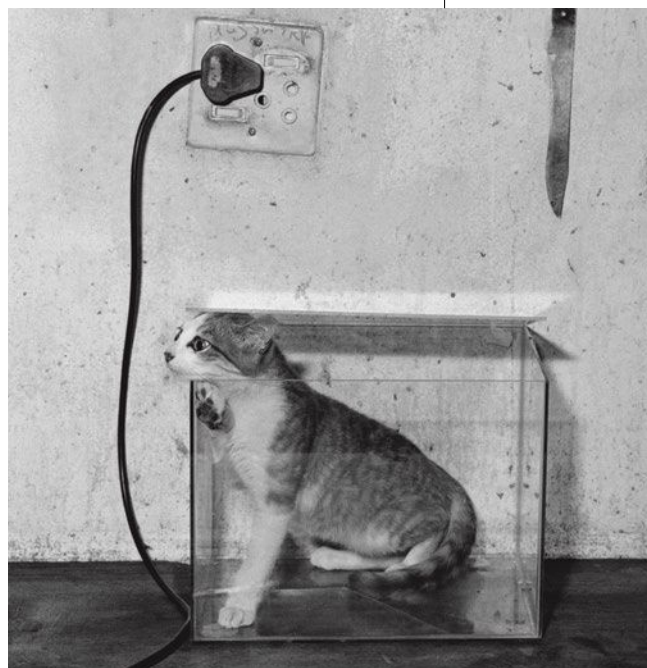
Unsurprisingly, his images are often accused of being dark. Roger welcomes this criticism as a good thing. “When psychologists like Karl Jung or Joseph Campbell referred to the dark side, they were talking about the side of themselves that people repressed.”

As a result, “I hope that my photos will let people reconcile with the fragments of their inner self that they haven’t come to terms with. I have often said that the light comes

from the dark. I don’t really understand why people are bothered by the dark. In the Jungian sense, darkness is what people fear inside them. Dark is enigmatic.”

*To view more of Roger Ballen’s work, you can visit [www.rogerballen.com](http://www.rogerballen.com)*

➔ “In this world, human relationship with animals isn’t an harmonious one. Even pets... people buy pets because they feel a sense of alienation and need something to nurture,” says Ballen.



A selection of some of the best images from the Indian mainstream media

# 1000 Words



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**B K Janardhan,**  
Deccan Herald

## Tricoloured Sky

A plane shows off its prowess at Aero India, the biennial aviation exhibition at the Yelahanka Air Force Station, Bengaluru in February. The crowd of people observing the aircraft and the manner in which the aircraft seems to emerge from the crowd itself, seems like a metaphor for the spectators' soaring spirits.



## Hosing Down the Flames

Firemen successfully douse the fire that was caused by a short circuit in a Mumbai suburb. The water bouncing off the signboard looks like rain in this image. The photographer has also captured a moment of camaraderie between servicemen in a dangerous profession.

**Levin Raju,**  
DNA



## Feeling the Blues

One can almost feel the chill in the air as the man feeds migratory birds on the banks of Yamuna river in New Delhi. The overcast day and the overall blue tones further add to the sense of calm in this photograph.

Praveen Khanna,  
The Indian Express

## Waste to Salvage

Sans any basic protective gear, ragpickers sift through waste at a dumping ground in Mulund, Mumbai. By juxtaposing the garbage in the foreground with the highrises and mountains in the background, the photographer makes a poignant comment on how we are affecting the landscape of our city.

Levin Raju,  
DNA



## PHOTO FEATURE



### **Soumya Sankar**

**Bose** is a documentary photographer who has obtained a postgraduate diploma in Photography from Pathshala. He was gifted his first camera, a Kodak KB10, when he was 11 years old, at a local festival.

He started shooting because he wanted to make portraits of his favourite people, such as his grandparents and his uncles and aunts.

This desire to preserve the memories of certain people forms the foundation of his current body of work.

# Silenced Theatre

A quietly disappearing form of theatre, artistes who have voiced myriads of characters, but now have few spectators, homes and settings that reflect an India that can now only be found in Satyajit Ray stories. Soumya Sankar Bose explores these and much more.

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**J**atra, a once-famous form of folk theatre from Bengal, employing dialogue, monologue, songs and instrumental music to tell stories, has gradually slipped away from public memory. History and technology played their own parts in the diminishing of a centuries-old art form. The partition and consequent formation of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), led to a kind of Jatra that did not have Hindu folk tales, while on the Indian side of the border, actors stopped

playing Muslim characters. Television and cinema drew people away from the streets and closeted them in their homes. And so, Jatra companies grew smaller and smaller. In 2001, there were 300 companies who, while employing over 20,000 people, were forced to often offer free performances.

This is my attempt to peep into the daily lives of these stalwarts of street theatre, and to glimpse the gloried days when stories were considered to be the fibre of magic.

— As told to Ambarin Afsar

📍 **Dulal Addya, 66,** poses as Girish Chandra Ghosh, the father of Bengali theatre. Barabazar, Kolkata

**“Where were the patrons who would relish Jatrapala, enacted on wooden stages, without any barriers between the actors and the audience?”**

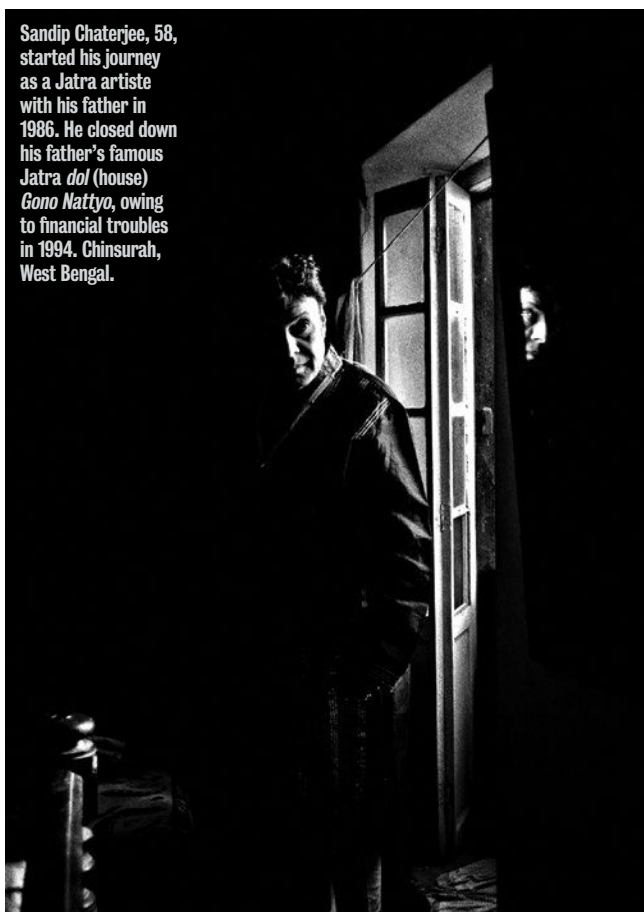


📍 **Sima Bose** used to be a famous Jatra artist in the 1960s and 70s. For the last ten years, however, she has been suffering from arthritis and cannot leave her bed. Kolkata, West Bengal.



Bela Sarkar, 65, who used to be known as the queen of Jatra by her patrons, poses for a portrait at the doorway of her home. Belaghata, Kolkata.

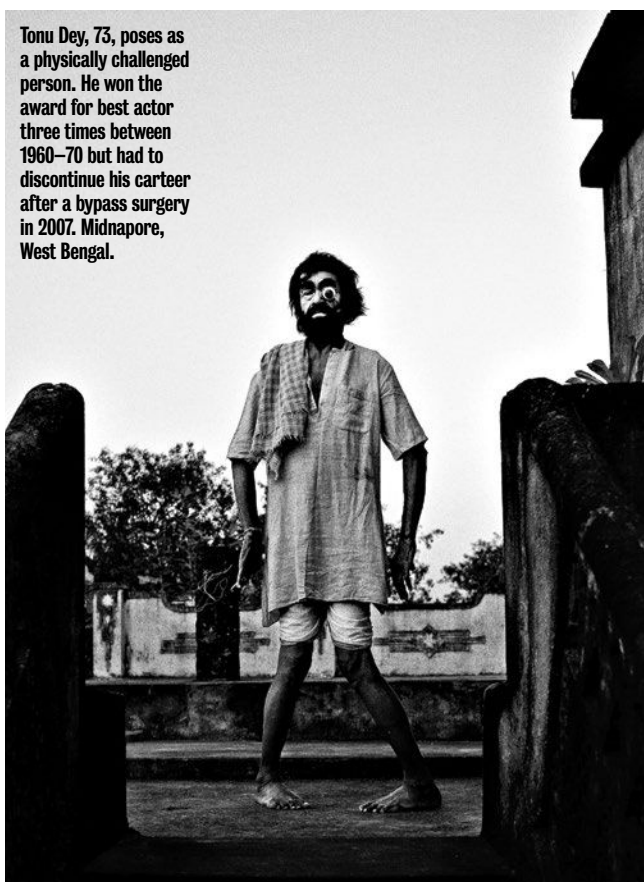
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Sandip Chatterjee, 58, started his journey as a Jatra artiste with his father in 1986. He closed down his father's famous Jatra *dol* (house) *Gono Naty*, owing to financial troubles in 1994. Chinsurah, West Bengal.



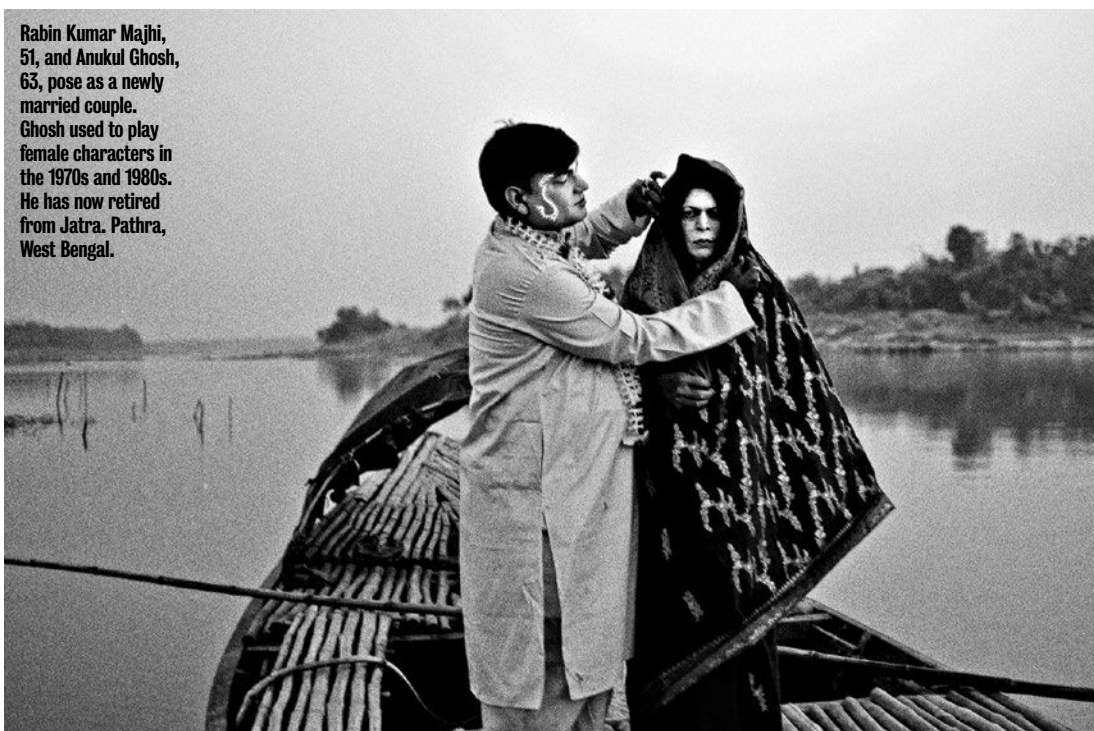
My uncle, Shyamal Dihidar, 51, poses as a police officer. Gokulpore, West Bengal.



Tonu Dey, 73, poses as a physically challenged person. He won the award for best actor three times between 1960–70 but had to discontinue his career after a bypass surgery in 2007. Midnapore, West Bengal.

**“Where went the audience who would be transfixed by plots that ranged from mythological and historical stories to social and contemporary issues?”**

Rabin Kumar Majhi, 51, and Anukul Ghosh, 63, pose as a newly married couple. Ghosh used to play female characters in the 1970s and 1980s. He has now retired from Jatra. Pathra, West Bengal.



### Experiences that Became the Basis for this Documentation Project

📍 Kanhai Bangor, 66, is a farmer by profession but is famous for Vivek, a character that he played for a drama titled *Conscience*. Ghatal, West Bengal.

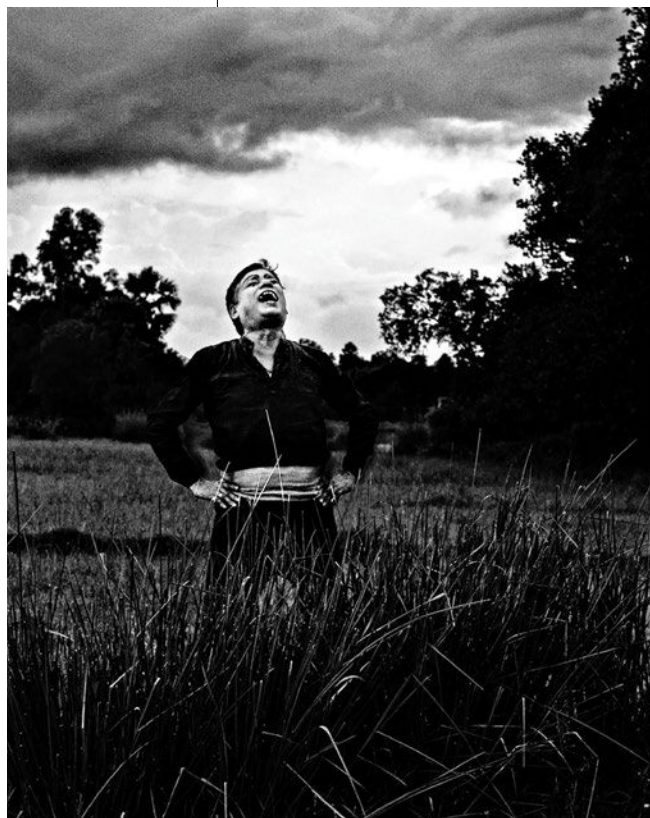
- Before photographing the Jatra artistes, I used to speak with them for a couple of weeks or even a few months in order to understand them and the various characters that they played.
- After figuring out which characters they would like to portray for my character, I would make a few

rough sketches as they would help me visualise the final photograph.

- While shooting, I also try to keep the fable of the King and the Spider in my mind. Every day cannot be my day, and there are times when my shot just doesn't work out, but I don't lose hope.

📍 Dr Bholanath Banik, 57, and Sudarshon Chakrabakarty, 66, both immensely gifted artistes, have been working in the Jatra since 1960, but are now on the dole. Jagannath Hall, Bangladesh.

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# Your Pictures

This month, we challenged our readers to capture the dynamism of ethereal-looking clouds. Here is a look at the best images from the contest.

## The Prize:

**Grand Prize Winner:** The winning image gets the coveted *Better Photography's* Collector's Edition 12 Pocket Guide set, which are comprehensive guides on how to make the best pictures in every genre, ranging from sports, wildlife to festivals and colours.

To see all the nominees images for this contest, visit [www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

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## ◀ Marbled Sky

Surajit Ganguly, Kolkata

"It was a sunny day in Darjeeling when I made this picture. I was walking about when I noticed the wispy cloud formations. When framing the image, I made sure to capture as much of the scene as possible. This is because I wanted to emphasise the dynamism of the scene—the fleeting clouds and the bustling marketplace. I later converted the image to black and white to enhance the etherealness of the clouds."

**Camera:** Canon EOS 5D Mark III

**Lens:** Canon EF 16–35mm f/4L IS USM

**Aperture:** f/22

**Shutterspeed:** 1/3200sec  
**ISO:** 400



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Function



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Adjustment

Battery  
Power Test

16:9  
Wide Screen



Infrared  
Remote  
to Control Functions  
of Video Light



Flash Speedlite **DFL-1000T**

6 in **58**  
ISO 100

**Lithium**  
Battery

**TTL**  
For Canon  
/ Nikon



Tripod CUM Monopod **DTR-495**



**Winner**



## Honourable Mention

**A Sky full of Stars**

Asher Leo, Malaysia

"One night, I set out to capture the Milky Way. Unfortunately, it was a very cloudy night, but I still wanted to shoot.

I set my camera on a tripod and waited patiently for the clouds to disperse. While I didn't get a chance to observe a clear sky, I found this cloud formation and immediately shot the picture. I was quite happy with the result as it gives the impression of guiding the viewer to the Milky Way."

**Camera:** Canon EOS 60D**Lens:** Canon EF-S

18–135mm f/3.5–5.6 IS

**Aperture:** f/8**Shutterspeed:** 1/30sec**ISO:** 400

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## Honourable Mention

**In the Middle of Nowhere**

Kartik Jasti, Dwarka

"When I was in Ladakh, this particular scene caught my attention because of the small cottage nestled in the middle of the endless landscape. The clouds, emerging from the far side of mountains, added to the sense of detachment. To capture this feeling, I made sure to include as much of the sky as possible to the composition and made the resultant image."

**Camera:** Nikon D800**Lens:** Tokina AT-X 116 PRO DX-II 11–16mm f/2.8**Aperture:** f/16**Shutterspeed:** 1/200sec**ISO:** 50

Participate in the  
'Your Pictures Contest' on  
[betterphotography.in/contests](http://betterphotography.in/contests)  
to win a chance to be  
featured in the magazine and  
win exciting prizes!

### ⬇ Heavenly Abode

Tathya Macwan, Ahmedabad

"I was in Uttarakhand right after the 2013 floods. The extent of the destruction was colossal. Yet, the landscape before me said otherwise.

The clouds emerging from the mountains gave the scene a peaceful and hopeful feeling, which I captured."

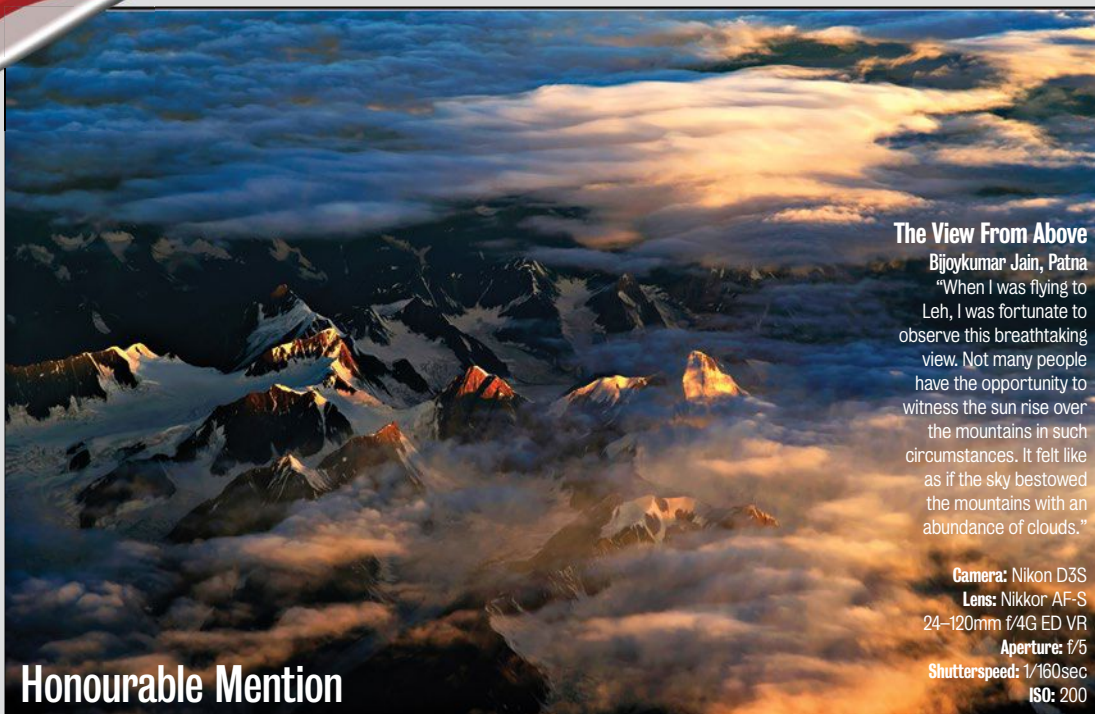
Camera: Nikon D800E

Lens: Nikkor AF-S  
28-300mm f/3.5-5.6G  
ED VR

Aperture: f/8

Shutterspeed: 1/4000sec

ISO: 500



Honourable Mention

### The View From Above

Bijoykumar Jain, Patna

"When I was flying to Leh, I was fortunate to observe this breathtaking view. Not many people have the opportunity to witness the sun rise over the mountains in such circumstances. It felt like as if the sky bestowed the mountains with an abundance of clouds."

Camera: Nikon D3S

Lens: Nikkor AF-S  
24-120mm f/4G ED VR

Aperture: f/5

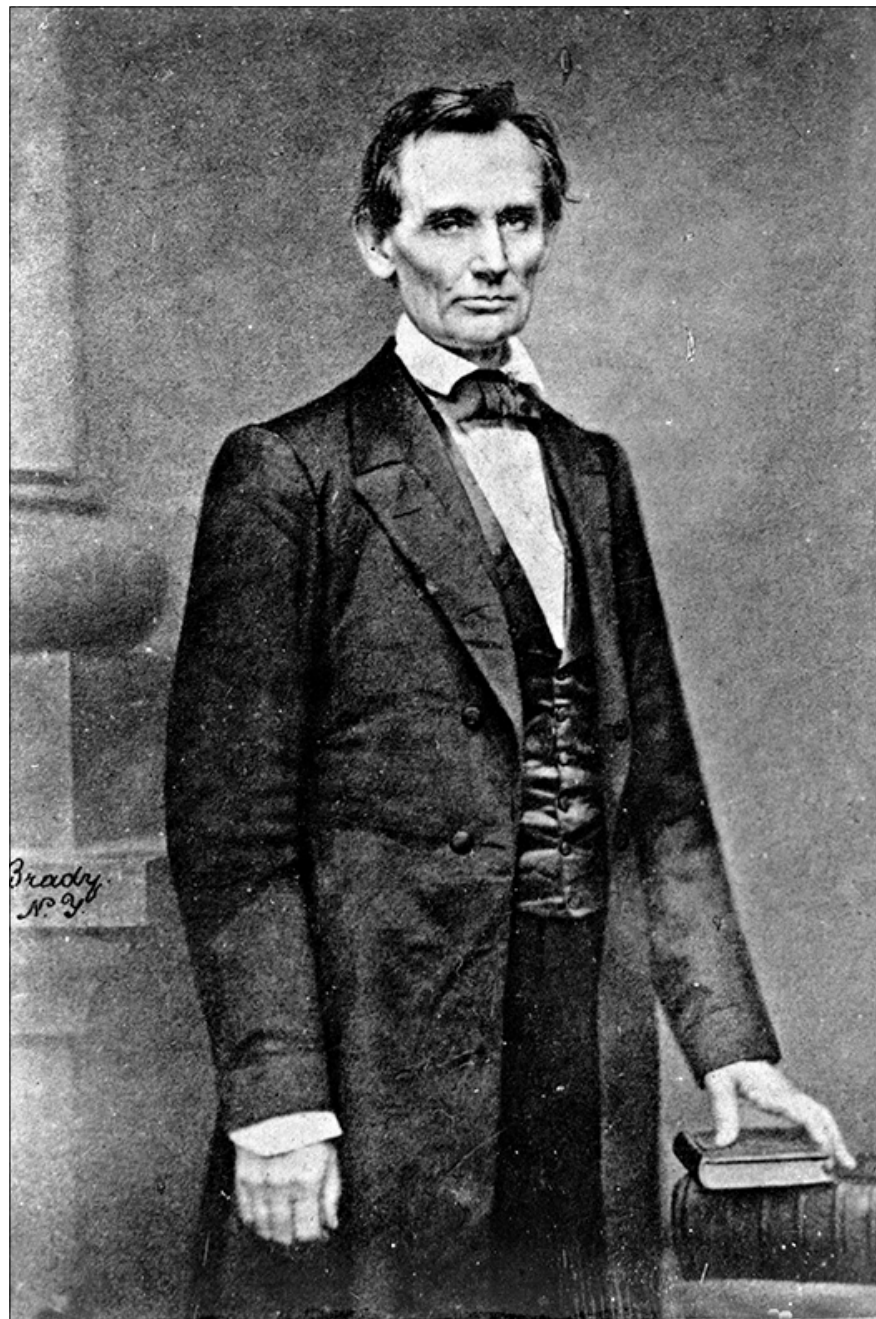
Shutterspeed: 1/160sec

ISO: 200



Honourable Mention

# The Story Behind the Picture



**Photograph by:**

*Mathew Brady*

**Image Source:**

*Library of Congress*

## The Photograph that Won Lincoln the Presidency

Pioneer photographer Mathew Brady is best known for his photographs of the vivid battlefields of the American Civil War (1861–1865). However, he also photographed 18 Presidents of the United States, one of whom was Abraham Lincoln. This particular image of Lincoln was shot on 27 February 1860, just moments before he could deliver his famous Cooper Union address in New York. The success of the speech won him the approval and support for his presidential candidacy among New Yorkers.

In the weeks succeeding the event, the image appeared in publications like *Harper's Weekly*, who converted the photograph to a full-page woodcut portrait, commending Lincoln on his triumph. Later, in October, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* also featured the image. Brady himself sold several carte-de-visite photographs of the image as well.

When asked about the photograph, Brady recollected how he drew Lincoln's collar up high, in order to give him a more distinguished appearance. A year after securing the Republican nomination and the presidency, Lincoln met Brady and told him that this image and his Cooper Union speech were responsible for him winning the Presidency. **BP**